

## Ross Dowson archives – correspondence – Year 1984

- 01\_08 Letter to Sheila (S.), re: the memorial meeting for Pat Schulz (Mitchell); RD to speak but all males barred by radical feminist friends, thus 22 years of her activity ignored; other positive news
- 01\_12 Socialist Rights Defence Fund flyer, ad for 5-part *City-TV docudrama ‘RCMP On Trial’*
- 01\_16 Letter to Ron Thompson, the (Sask. NDP) *Commonwealth*, re: enclosing an article and thanking them for publishing an earlier one
- 01\_16B Letter to *Our Times*, Toronto, re: enclosing an article for use
- 01\_19 Letter to Anne D., Ottawa, re: important support for SRDF from Svend Robinson and *Canadian Dimension*
- 01\_23 Letters to Socialist Action, San Francisco, CA and Socialist Workers Collective, Toronto, re: SA declared as a public faction of SWP (US)
- 01\_23B Letter to Howard B., re: seeking any information on the Saskatchewan Left Caucus
- 01\_25 Letter to veteran socialist Darwin Charlton, Salmon Arm BC, re: RD recalls his 1941 trip west; the Noakes’ welcome; the Vancouver comrades; the bookstores; the NDP in Ontario today
- 01\_26 Letter to “Dear friend of Darwin Charlton who is opening a bookstore in Salmon Arm (BC);” RD reminisces about his life-long love affair with books; the experience of running a bookstore
- 01\_31 Letter to the Editor, (Toronto) *Globe & Mail*, re: as the Ont. S-G Caplan releases a few more facts of RCMP misdeeds, when will the MacDonald report deal with intrusions into the NDP and the unions?
- 02\_02 Letter to the Editor, Toronto *Star*, re: time to ask whether the 12 RCMPers, not charged by the MacDonald Commission, have been “disciplined;” talk of the “civilian” CSIS but it lacks citizen control
- 02\_11 Note to self, re: “Trotskyist League meeting;” Spartacists are “incurable ultralefts;” convinced they are fighting fascism
- 02\_13 Letter to Eleanor (D.), North Hatley QC, re: suit against RCMP getting publicity; secret police Bill C9 moving to debate in House

03\_10 Letter to Dick (F.), re: good to see his article in Law Union News  
(Attached: notes by R.D. on Fidler article)

03\_28 Forward Group minutes re: split in LC on anti-NATO policy

03\_30 Letter to the Clerk, Standing Committee on Justice & Legal Affairs, House of Commons, re: application by RD to testify before Cttee on aspects of the MacDonald Commission's findings

04\_15 (Unfinished draft) letter to Jeff Mackler & Nat Weinstein (SWP), re: a review of the past decade of the SL/FG current; the present crisis of the RWL (revised letter sent May 5; (below at 5-05)

04\_15B Letter to Sandy and/or Art (J.), re: RD's need for a frame for a famous Japanese screen

04\_23 Letter to Marv (G.), Ottawa, re: welcoming his brief to a parliamentary committee

04\_24 Letter to Fiona Chapman, Alderman Layton's office, Toronto, re: disappointment that the local committee is merely seeking amendments to "secret state police" bill C9

04\_24B Letter to Svend (Robinson), re: congratulations in your principled opposition (to bill C9)

04\_24C Letter to Dan Heap, MP, re: RD's attempts to have the Toronto committee work through you and Svend in opposing bill C9 failed

05\_02 Undated notes referring to May 2<sup>nd</sup>, re: the captions for prints in Kopyto's office: the meaning of symbolism in several classical works of art

05\_02B Letter to the Editor, (Toronto) *Globe & Mail*, re: satirizing Bob Rae's wisdom that "the electorate chose a minority government"

05\_05 Letter to comrades Jeff Mackler & Nat Weinstein (SWP), re: the evolution of the Canadian Trotskyist currents since 1974; RD on the SWP, the RWL vs. the Forward Group's NDP orientation; our present work in the NDP Left Caucus

05\_14 Letter to Howard (B.), Regina, re: lack of information on two groups in the U.S. expelled from the SWP

05\_18 Letter to the ONDP convention organizers, re: requesting space for a literature table to promote the Socialist Rights Defence Fund

- 06\_20 Notes to self prior to meeting & ‘Notes on Meeting ONDP Left Caucus at Ont. Legislature;’ priority task to defend anti-NATO position of party; ‘Do we have a real split’ (in the LC); minutes
- 07\_08 Letter to Lucy Kershaw, re: success of the Ontario Left Caucus at the recent NDP convention
- 07\_23 Letter to Ted M., Trent U., Peterborough, re: sending him copy of the City-TV tape (‘RCMP on trial’)
- 07\_29 Letter to Dick (P.), Vancouver, re: the City-TV RCMP case tapes; any BC news of the SWP expulsions? The RWL muff their expulsion appeals at the NDP convention despite LC support
- 08\_17 R.D.’s 4 resolutions “drawn up for Lois B. for use by High Park NDPers at Broadbent’s public election meeting, Aug/84”
- 09\_13 Letter to *Briarpatch* magazine, G.M. Manz, Regina, re: lacking coverage of NDP (opposition against C9) and SRDF actions against the RCMP and CSIS
- 09\_24 Letters to Peter (S.), Montreal, re: seeking address of Polish *Solidarnosc News*, and to *Law Union News* re SRDF coverage
- 10\_03 First draft of a letter to (K. W.), Winnipeg, re: Mitch P.’s plans for a Trotskyist conference; the disaster of a previous attempt to unify the RWL and RMG due to a lack of prior agreement on principles  
(Attached: R.D.’s notes on phone call with Mitch on conference)
- 10\_03B Letter to Kimberley (W.), Winnipeg, re: Mitch’s ‘premature’ project for a new party on the basis of the US Socialist Action group; the experience of the Forward Group in the NDP with a broad Left Caucus; FG will be absent; Engels on the question of ‘unity’
- 10\_09 Letter to W. Galewski, Solidarnosc Information Office, OFL, re: requesting copies of their News; looking forward to the meeting
- 10\_16 Letter to Kimberley (W.), Winnipeg, re: Forward Group statement on proposed new Trotskyist party formation
- 10\_99 ***Document of the Forward Group, October, ‘Greetings to the revolutionary socialists gathering in Winnipeg*** November 9, 10 and 11 with the aim of structuring a Trotskyist formation...”
- 11\_10 Letter to Peter (S.), Montreal, re: thanks for sending *Labor Focus*; developments in Solidarnosc defence work

- 12\_14 Letter to Howard (B.), re: Left Caucus success at recent NDP council meeting; attempting to broaden its activities
- 12\_14B Letter to Anne (D.), re: Left Caucus at (NDP) council meeting does a good job on retaining the party anti-NATO position in face of an international retreat; camp finances and break-in
- 12\_17 Minutes of Forward Group (RD secretary), re: report on the Left Caucus and ONDP council meeting with details of debate
- 12\_30 Letter to Kimberley (W.), Winnipeg, re: any information on US ex-SWP tendencies? Our Left Caucus activities and issue of *Forward*
- 12\_31 Letter to Dick (P.), Vancouver, re: the example of Nicaragua, questions and comments on Canadian and US tendencies
- 1984-99 (*Undated, found in 1984*)     **Document: “Stop the frame-up in Poland!”**  
Outlawed trade union Solidarity faces trials; advocating socialist democracy; demand drop the charges, release the militants or grant open trials to world scrutiny

Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2  
Jan 8, 1984

Sheila Steele  
216 - 26th Street West  
Saskatoon, S7L0H6

*Pat Schultz (Mitchell)*

Dear Sheila:

What a pleasant surprise to receive your interesting card, your good words and the letter for Bill.

The memorial meeting for Pat was held yesterday afternoon and both your and Jean's contribution were read from the platform and well received. It was quite an impressive affair switched at the last moment ~~the~~ the more commodious facilities at the Board of Education Hall on College. Again as often happens with me I forgot to count the crowd--I would say that there were about 400 though and again I was distracted by persons I had not seen for sometime and thinking about the contribution I wanted to make from assessing just who was there. But my impression was that few of the old LSA comrades were there--for instance no Jeff White, Gary Porter, Don Tapscott and as they say--their spouses--- as you probably know the RWL operation is in Montreal and the Toronto branch is quite small. Zane Boyd, Dianne Palm, Irma and Cliff Orchard, Jim Onyschuk and ~~xxxxxxx~~ friend to whom I had to introduce myself, Toni Foster's mother who sat with me and filled in the information gap about they and theirs in England. There were a group of persons my age right behind me who I would have taken to be old teacher contacts but I do not know. But the majority were women, many of them quite young who came to much admire Pat for here recent years of work in Day Care area--and yes, Cathy was there whose contribution was a re-incarnation of Pat

The platform was interesting. Ruth and her son Kevin Budd played several beautiful peices including Bach's Air, ~~on a se~~ ~~as a strong~~ really hep singer, a Lauri Conger (unfortunately I still have difficulty getting the words) performed, a good contribution from Shelley Acheson who I gather is a leader in the Intl Women's Day circle, a fighting one from a day care leader, a Sandy Steinekr and one from Lois Bedard and all in all the platform was a really fine and inspiring tribute to Pat as a leader of a coterie of fighters in the women's movement here in Toronto

I was contacted several days earlier (probably through the suggestion of Dianne Mossman) and asked to speak which of course I agreed to do--at that time they told me that Deidre and several others including Art Young would be speaking too I was quite surprised about Art (if Pat had anything at all about the arrangements as he



and Gary were the persons that Pat took on when the new broomers decided that revolutionary socialists don't want day care facilities and women who have children are sell-outs. But a day or so before the affair I received a phone call cancelling my participation and any and all other males as it appears that Pat had made it clear that she wanted no males on the platform. Of course the memorial was in their hands and it is only correct that they should comply to any known request by Pat but I told them that any narrowly feminist platform would only give a distorted picture of Pat's contribution, that since I first met her in 1952 she had been a socialist and had been one of the leading cadre in the Trotskyist LSA--they told me that I could make a contribution from the floor. I told them that was fine but I suggested that the floor contribution would best not be scattered through the platform speeches but together afterwards.

A Lynda ?? formerly from Vancouver was recognized before me and rather crudely raised Pat's having been a Marxist and Trotskyist by claim her as part of the tradition of the RWL. With that I who only wanted to present the other 22 year long aspect of her as a socialist got the deep freeze, told I had to say only a few sentences and from my seat--a very poor situation and I tried to pull out. Oh yes, Jean's contribution attacked the LSA way to attack the LSA. All in all, there was a real anti-male atmosphere. The women's movement here seems to be very strongly influenced by Lesbianism at this time--as you have probably experienced out there--a real hostility to males. Of course I wanted to say a few words about our being comrades in a common anti-capitalist struggle the scope of which would absolutely require such unity. The whole atmosphere was wrong- I hoped to make a positive sensitive contribution but Jean's letter, Lynda's contribution and the hostility of the chair--well --Dale thought I made my point--and I hope I didn't come through as a disruptionist of some crank kind. All in all it was a fine memorial to Pat even if unbalanced

I am glad to hear that Kevin is such a success. Probably he doesn't even remember me. If he were so inclined I would like to see him again. When Bill drops in I am sure he would like to see Kevin again. Congratulations for Marlon. And how is your father ?

We have consolidated the Ont NDP Left Caucus here but it is so slow moving. I have just had a phone call that now the Sewell has resigned from the council to write for the GM we have an opportunity to win this seat and would I agree to endorse the head of the Toronto Tenant movement who is an ex CPer if he runs on the label-----Yes, I said if he runs on the NDP label

CITY TV made a 5 part series of about 9 minutes each on our suit called the RCMP on Trial. Harry and I played ourselves--Ernie Tate phoned me up to tell me he thought it was first rate. We will shortly have a video-tape of it which you might like to borrow. When we were making it a fellow asked me why the RCMP paid such attention to a small group like the LSA-LSO. I quoted him from a small book by Uot TDr. O'Toole to the effect "The LSA appears to be the only organization with even the slightest likelihood of undergoing the transition from sect to party." Yes, those were good days--thank you took --and I am looking to some kind of return with socialist greetings

Ross



# RCMP ON TRIAL

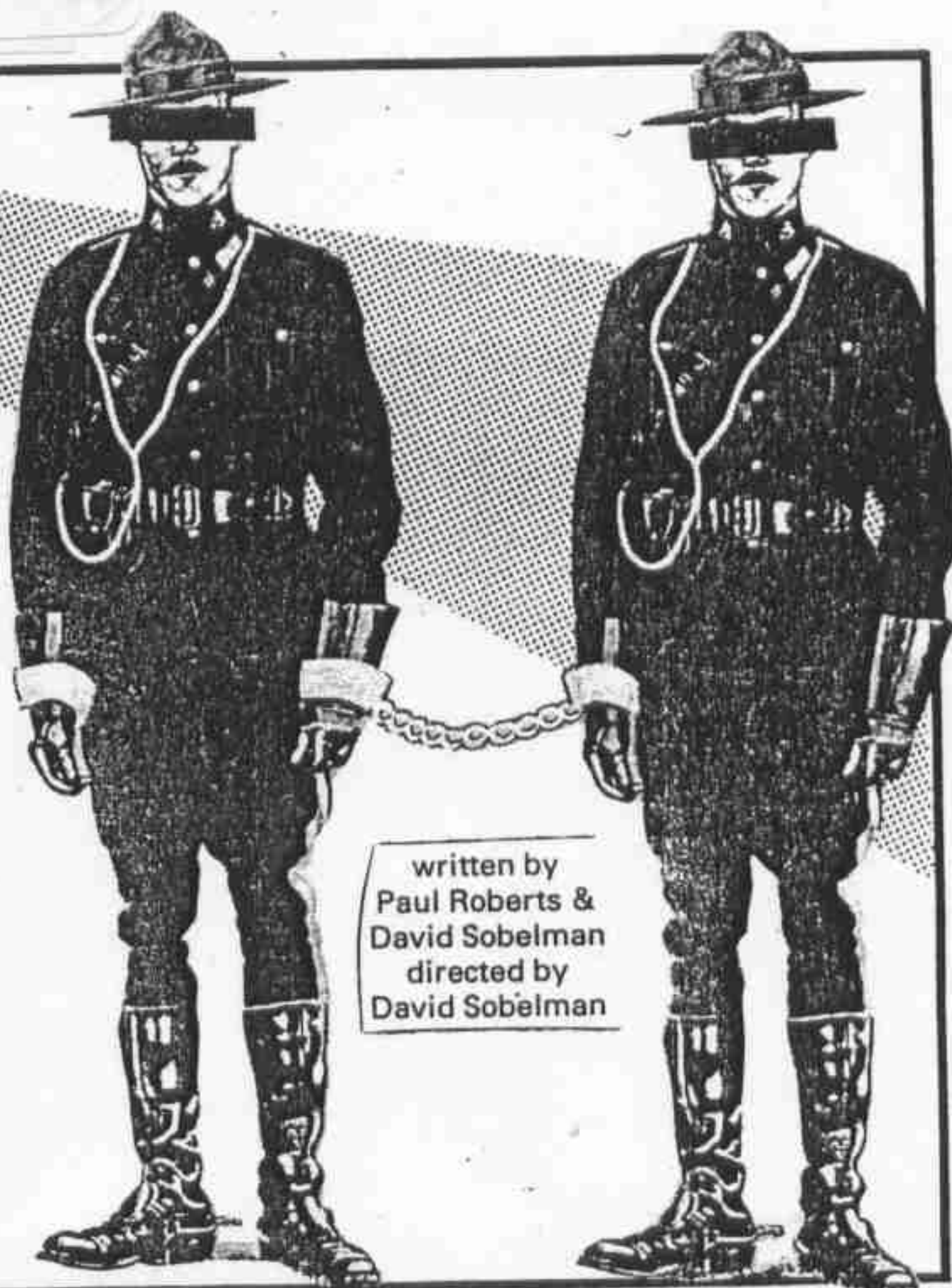
THE FIVE PART DOCUDRAMA SHOWN  
LAST FALL ON CITY TV.

now available on videotape on loan from  
SOCIALIST RIGHTS DEFENCE FUND  
50 Thorncliffe Avenue, Toronto M4K 1V5  
\$25 deposit refundable

"It was a bold opening to our new  
serials. The question that interested me  
was at what point does a democratic  
government have the right to infringe  
on individual liberties. It doesn't matter  
whether you believe in what Dowson  
says, the point is his individuals rights  
were violated." — David Sobelman  
—from interview in **NOW** — Toronto's  
weekly news and entertainment voice —  
Jan. 12-18, 1984.

With thanks to

**Citytv**  
Channel 57 • Cable 7



written by  
Paul Roberts &  
David Sobelman  
directed by  
David Sobelman

The videotape RCMP on Trial is available for viewing at meetings, seminars, house gatherings, etc. It is a dramatic commentary on the RCMP's infamous Operation Checkmate and is part of the ongoing debate on what the mandate should be of the new Security Intelligence Service, now before the House of Commons.

Stephen Lewis, the well-known commentator introduces it from the floor of the Ontario Legislature where it was admitted that the RCMP had investigated the NDP. This admission and Ross Dowson's appearance before Judge Krever's Royal Commission of Inquiry led to the revelations of Operation Checkmate - a four year long campaign of harassment and violation of the civil rights of a wide range of individuals and groups of completely legitimate dissent.

It is dramatized by professional actors, with Dowson and his counsel Harry Kopyto enacting their own roles. Among those appearing are Paul Copeland, James Lockyer, Joan Kates and others. It can be shown through any standard videotape player and TV set. Viewing time is 25 minutes.

It is available on loan from the Socialist Rights Defence Fund, 50 Thorncliffe Avenue, Toronto M4K 1V5. The \$25 will be refunded upon return of the tape.



Ross Dowson #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.  
Toronto M4Y2K2  
January 16, 1984

The Commonwealth  
Ron Thompson

Dear friend:

I am taking the liberty of sending you an article that will appear in the upcoming issue of Forward. It deals with the pressing matter of the new draft mandate for the Security Intelligence Service which I understand may come before the house in a matter of days.

I am hoping that you can see your way to publish it in your coming issue.

I am also enclosing for your information an article on the excellent response we have been getting to the SRDF. I attribute some of this success to your publishing my previous article in the Commonwealth and the large scale ~~distributions~~ distributions that we made of it on a leaflet a copy of which is enclosed.

sincerely

Ross Dowson



Ross Nowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave  
Toronto M4Y2K2  
Jan 16, 1984

Our Times  
1357A St. Clair Ave., W  
Toronto, M6E 1C5

Dear Frank

A couple of days ago one of your staff phoned about the suit against the RCMP and the Socialist Rights Defence Fund activity.

It is my impression that he ~~did not~~ had not been acquainted as to the importance of this effort in defence of civil rights in Canada and the critical situation that now faces us with the new mandate for the proposed Canadian Security Intelligence Service. He appears to have had little space at his disposal. Or let us say that he certainly did not share my opinion as to the importance of the question...which if at all possible should not be left to another issue.

I am enclosing a proof of an article that will appear very shortly which you are welcome to use whole or in part. I am also enclosing the latest on the responses to the Socialist Rights Defence Fund efforts which is to appear with several other articles

Did your staff see the previous article picked up by the Commonwealth and the article in Now--see enclosed.

sincerely

Ross Nowson

40 Homewood Ave., #2311  
Toronto, Ont., M4Y2K2  
Jan 19, 1984

Anne Dowson  
Ottawa

Dear Anne

Just a short note to cover the SRDF sheet.

At the time I was mailing last night I heard that Robinson stood by the quote that is in the article. A very very good thing. I must confess that aside from Robinson's position, ~~which~~ is not completely unexpected, I never thought that the NDP parliamentary caucus would carry through. A very encouraging situation no matter what weakness may appear in their speeches. This should give the party a lift and new credibility among radicals. All the ridings should congratulate the Caucus on this

Marv had some good material in the last Cdn Dimension but strange to say for an NDPer and Left Caucus spokesperson he said nothing about the NDP and ~~the~~ what it should do or could be expected to do on the Security Service Bill. Give him the shots next time you see him. Surely he just didn't give in to the anti-NDP sectarianism of the Dimension editors.

If you have some time and can get the <sup>INVOICE</sup> schedule of the debate it would be good if you could attend. I am sure Svend would be pleased to let you know when debate could be expected--and it would be good if Ottawa riding people went down to stiffen their backs. The H of C is a terrible place designed to intimidate worker representatives. Have you read In Place of Fear by Aneurin Bevan. ?

I am hoping that you have sent us a copy of Laxer's document and any related comments --we will have to take it up I think in the issue going to press.

See you next weekend. Cheryl has a supper engagement with me

not sent  
Anne will be here  
this weekend



Forward  
Box 778, Adelaide St. P  
Toronto, Canada M5C 2K1  
Jan 23, 1984

Socialist Action, #308  
3435 Army St.,  
San Francisco, CA 94110

Dear Comrades:

We received a copy of your Nov 18, 1983 Open Letter. We note that you declare yourselves to be an public faction of the SWP. and that you intend to publish a newspaper, pamphlets and a theoretical magazine. When you do any of these things would you please let us know and we will subscribe.

with Trotskyist greetings

Ross Dowson

I am enclosing a pre-released page of our paper Forward for your information

Forward  
Box 778, Adelaide St. P.  
Toronto M5C 2K1  
Jan 23, 1984

Socialist Workers Collective  
#706 - 99 Tyndall Ave  
Toronto M6K 2G2

Dear Barry Weisleder

I acquainted the comrades with the communication that Socialist Action (USA) has put out. Astonishing developments. Thanks. I also told them of our phone conversation and your proposition of a debate or exchange of views in a public forum between ourselves, yourselves and the RLW. The comrades did not see the value of such a discussion at this time.

We are writing direct to Socialist Action, which we note is a public faction, to send us other material

comradely

Ross Dowson

Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2

Jan 23, 1984

Howard Brown

Dear Howearð

I have been following your good deeds from afar as they surface in the Commonwealth and now the latest (Dec.) issue of Briarpatch.

Did that Sask Left Caucus that appeared at the Sask provincial convention publish a statement of purposes or aims..and was anything published for the delegates to the Sask Fed.?

If so I am quite anxious to obtain any of that material and would very much appreciate your sending me it just as soon as possible.

Hope this finds you and the family in good shape. As you will see in the advanced page from Forward on the RAMP suit things are going along not at all badly. The news that Weisleder handsout on the situation in the SWP is very disappointing.

comradely

Ross



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Avenue  
Toronto M4Y 2K2  
Jan 25, 1984

Darwin Charlton  
Box 972  
Salmon Arm, B.C.  
V0E 2T0

Dear Comrade Charlton;

It was a real pleasure to receive your note the other day. I have intended to respond for sometime but just never seem to get around to it.

It is good to see that you have been standing firmly in the ranks and are still outwardly oriented. Of course I remember you well, the lift you gave me, the inspiring Noakes family, particularly Flora and Harry. Harry was quite elderly when I first met him but he was truly an inspired socialist. That hitch-hiking trip I took then-- I think it was 1941--was a real experience for me - not only to meet the various comrades such as Byron Johnston over on the Island- but to see the country which we have carved out of the wilderness.

I will never forget the great enthusiasm that the Noakes' put to arranging the meeting in the old log school house - the old Coleman lamp practically blinded me. And the great pleasure that Harry took in taking me back up into the hills to wander over the area that he and the family had cleared. And their home on Shuswap was truly a work of art --I hope that it is still standing and being used. I never did see the salmon run. I always felt respectfully adopted when ever I came through that way on subsequent speaking and organizational tours--they were comrades in the full meaning of the word--much better than friends- but companions in the struggle for socialism. Unforgettable.

The idea of a bookstore is a very good one. We have always had them--a sort of public window onto the world. They have been instrumental in recruiting a great many to the marxist movement. I kept us up front with one at Church and Queen Street (the very names tell you that it is a prominent location, for some years--only closing it down about a year ago when they doubled the rent to \$1,500 a month--incredible. But I still get books for comrades and friends through an outlet I know of. Since I am no longer locked down to our store I have managed to get around to the others--and alas there is not one really good bookstore in the city of Toronto--the English speaking center of the country .

Yes, I will write your friend in a separate paper on some of my experiences which I think will be helpful. I do not know the situation in Salmon Arm and I do not know how committed our friend is



to the idea of a second hand bookstore. My own experience tells me that it should be a new bookstore, of course largely if not exclusively paperbacks. Perhaps you can help her resolve the matter to her satisfaction in light of my contrary opinion. I think you must know Ruth Bullock of the Vanguard Bookstore in Vancouver. Her address is 3540 Commercial St., Vancouver, V5N 4E8--phone 879-3413. Ruth is well acquainted with all the scientific socialist literature that is currently available. I would think that she would be prepared for a period to encompass your requirements in her orders and thereby save you a fair amount. Before biting the bullet, if your friend is able it would be very useful if she could go down to Vancouver to meet and talk things over with Ruth. Something to consider. The store Ruth ran at a previous location was too narrowly conceived in my opinion--too narrowly, too exclusively, too explicitly socialist, all the more so for Salmon Arm.

The bookstores I have set up have been stocked so as to take people towards socialist ideas and not just meet the needs of persons who already (sometimes mistakenly) conceive of themselves as socialists. As the saying goes--man does not live by bread alone. More people will come to socialist ideas from Jack London's Iron Heel and Upton Sinclair's The Jungle than will come via Marx's Capital. I favor a bookstore that has the appearance of a more general bookstore but handles all the key, the important socialist books too. I also tried as much as possible to finance it by using the services of the mass circulation pocketbook companies whose rates are broad and general and who take returns. I will write you on this question within a few days but it would be good if she is stuck on a second hand bookstore that you might ease the way for her to consider a new bookstore--for strange to say it takes less capital, is less risky and inevitably takes the store in the direction of being more popular.

You ask if I can possibly manage to get out to the coming BC NDP convention. Of course there is the problem of money--I have no income but the old age pension. And of course I have no savings at all--always having worked for the movement--since coming out of the army--for just enough to get along. Besides my tendency now is not to put myself in situations where I have to carry the struggle. It almost always happens as many people consider me to be the most able. But that is all wrong in my opinion. New elements have to come forward--I am now 67, and if necessary they have to be thrust forward by my consciously pulling back.

I am a member of the St. George Ontario NDP, the Rosedale federal NDP and the Ward 6 Toronto NDP and right now pushing the Ontario NDP Left Caucus to get on with a regular Left Caucus Toronto forum. I am enclosing a copy of the Manifesto we put out in time for the last federal convention which I think you will find quite useful. I play a very up-front role in the Left Caucus from the floor. I am looking forward to the forums to become a pole of attraction for all socialists. There are more persons who consider themselves to be socialists than ever before but there is organizational chaos. I am hoping that the Left Caucus can serve as a poll for regroupment. The riding organizations are firmly in the grip of electoral opportunists and while socialists come around them they do not stay--for there is nothing to hold them. The anti-war movement has carried some massive mobilizations here and our Left Caucus people have put the NDP up front in it--publishing a mass circulation bulletin and effective buttons -- so we are continuing to fuel the fires of the class struggle in socialist solidarity Ross Dowson

I keep watching for Poland to bring new battalions into the struggle



Ross Dowson #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
January 26, 1984

Dear friend of Darwin Chariton who is opening a bookstore in Salmon Arm.

I have had a big experience in operating bookstores--Let us see what I can pass along to you that will be useful from this side of the table.

I have never run a second hand bookstore and I have never seen one ~~that I have ever seen~~, run by anyone else who wanted to effectively promote labor and socialist ideas. I think the big problem is obtaining a suitable stock--a sufficient number of books that are worthwhile...that are second hand or used books

I started picking up books when I was about 15 years old. Every Friday night I went with my father on a round of the two or three bookstores in the two or three different concentrations in the city here. My father was what could be called a philosophical anarchist and a master printer - interested in all ideas and all fine books but particularly in the field of printing and color. A few years later through an older brother I came in contact with two of the leaders and founders of the early Communist Party who were expelled for Trotskyism and I joined the pioneer forces of that movement. This caused me to develop a real interest in books on labor and socialism --and I widened my reading and collecting

Sometime before World War II I had occasion to formally consider that character of the library that I had evolved into pulling together. I remember one night looking over the shelves and concluding that the number of really important books on my shelves that I had purchased second hand was miniscule--that the books that I really wanted to keep, to use for reference or to re-read or just to taste occasionally, I had purchased new. I can't resist dropping into bookstores wherever I go. And that experience has been affirmed to the hilt. There is another type of bookstore that has appeared on the scene - largely stocked with publishers' remainders - new- but drastically reduced brought in from the New York clearing houses--mainly art books, poetry, biography, criticism. The big development of course is the mass circulation paperback or pocket book. The result of these developments is the decline of the second hand bookstore--into second hand pocket bookstores and comic bookstores many of them operating on the basis of trade ins--and the development of a few scholarly bookstores (secondhand) who price for collectors and who work the book want lists. These latter bookstores obtain their stock by buying up libraries. Believe it or not I have been approached to sell my books. A little while back I capitulated to the pressure of one of these operators --a socialist-- and sold him a small set of May Day leaflets that were published during World War I, in mint condition for the sum I think of 1,200 dollars. He sold them to the archives of the city of Toronto--I xeroxed them before I turned them over to him and with that money we published my booklet Dowson VS the RCMP

Books of interest to the likes of us seldom if ever turn up in the second hand bookstores. I or my heirs could sell my books for three and four times what a second hand bookstore could possibly lay out for them. I haven't the slightest intention of selling them and I hope my heirs would give them away to various comrades of mine who I know would like them. The moment my name appears in the obits there will be several



dealers knocking on the door. I have already been approached by persons who work for the Ottawa archives- They have gone through my library to list those titles that I happen to have that no one else appears to now have and they are now listed in their catalogue----- but this is somewhat off ~~xxx~~ the mark of thinking about a store. The book business is now very highly organized and one of the results is that according to my experience it would be difficult to gather and keep replenishing a stock of worthwhile titles for a second hand bookstore--and particularly outside of a major center such as Vancouver or Toronto

Second hand books that are good are now rare, their prices have gone up--and there is the mass circulation pocket book. I now think ~~this~~ they are key to the type of store you would like to operate. I assume you know the major pocketbook publishers, Mentor, Bantam, Penguin, Pelican, Dell etc etc . Their lists are so large, directed ~~xxxxx~~ in some respects to the expanding school system - they are turning out so many titles that from time to time they republish some of the really great books of social interest.

The last bookstore I ran was basically a pocket book bookstore -- I handled all the lists but just the titles that I carefully selected. They give thirty days and even better they take returns so they are always keeping your stock alive. This in my opinion is key--to be able to turn back books that are slow or you can't sell and that you really don't want anyway. They like to put in the stock on the basis of what they are pushing at the time over TV and radio--I took a selection of those even though most of them are junk in order to pay the rent and I fleshed out the store with selected titles that might attract the type of customers we wanted and titles that we wanted to sell. So the capital tied up in stock is minimal allowing me to allocate hard accumulated funds to meet the rent for an up front location . The last store we had when we moved in cost 750 a month. It was right at a key intersection in the downtown area on the edge of the centre of the city.. The only way we could meet that rent was by splitting the space in two. We needed to be up front with a good window--and a friend of ours who was a printer needed to be central but no window

Ah yes, the key stock of course were the books of the labor and socialist movement--the stores raison d'etre . Aside from the pocket book operations that publish a few these books are published by five or six outfits---Monthly Review Press, Pathfinder, New Left Books(Verso) Progress, Charles Kerr, Pluto, Merlin. And then nearly all the major publishers have some titles that you would want to carry.

Before you do anything why don't you go into Vancouver to meet Ruth Bullock of Vanguard books. I think she would be pleased to take you around to the various bookstores, talk over with you her experiences and problems show you the various catalogues. You would enjoy the experience and it could be a crucial experience.

all the best

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M41 2K2-961-4554  
Jan. 31, 1984

Editor  
Toronto Globe and Mail

Sir:

So Solicitor-General Kaplan has been so good as to release a pitiful few more facts about the ignominious actions of the old RCMP Security Service against the Canadian people - about the Checkmate Operations of the 60s and 70s admittedly designed to de-stabilize and if possible destroy organizations of legitimate dissent.

It was one of a series of articles by Lawrence Martin appearing in the Globe and Mail in 1977 - specifically the one reporting on RCMP violations of the security of Ontario Health Records, that prompted the Ontario government to appoint the royal commission headed by Justice Horace Krever. It was following the admission there by RCMP Superintendent Taylor that the RCMP had written and circulated false letters in order "to sow dissensions in the socialist community" that the McDonald Commission released four volumes of heavily censored testimony on the long suppressed Operation Checkmate in April 1980. That testimony outlined 14 episodes which the two officers in charge said were only illustrative. "There are others but I can't recall them," testified one

From the report now released by Mr Kaplan we learn now, without clarification, that there were not 14 episodes but there were 15, and that episode 3, or is it episode 4 - an attempt to discredit an influential member of a group - took place in the province of Alberta?

When can we expect the McDonald Commission's report on other matters dealt with by Mr. Lawrence - the article dealing with intrusive investigations of the internal affairs of the NDP, and the article on the harassment of the trade union movement?

And the persons and organizations whose rights are once again admitted to have been violated, have they been so informed? Or has the government unilaterally decided that it is in their own best interests, along with those of the rest of the population, to cover up ~~these~~ outrageous violations of civil rights?

Yours

sincerely

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2-961-4554

February 2, 1984

The Toronto Star

The Editor:

Because in its opinion 12 identified RCMPers could not be charged under criminal law the McDonald Commission urged that they be disciplined by the force itself.

According to a recent Canadian Press dispatch Solicitor General Kaplan claims that some Mounties (other than those being charged by the Quebec government or being sued by myself) have been disciplined. Although this is in flat contradiction to an August 33 CP dispatch to the effect that RCMP Commissioner Simmonds decided it would not be appropriate for the force itself to take action against them.

Mr Kaplan would not say how many were disciplined nor comments as to the nature of the discipline - all of which points up a key problem flowing from the very nature of the RCMP. Since its origin as a para-military cavalry force organized to crush Indian-Metis resistance to the encroachments of railway interests and white private settlement of their communal lands the RCMP hierarchy has enforced its own discipline, in secret and often to the detriment of the lower ranks.

Such a situation is certainly in violation of all the talk about a new "civilian" Security Intelligence Service. This astonishing absence of citizen control is not dealt with in the new mandate that Solicitor General Kaplan is seeking to push through the house in the face of the various doubts in the ranks of the Progressive Conservative Caucus and the fundamental opposition of the New Democratic Caucus.

sincerely

Ross Dowson



*(From notes by R.D.)*

Trotskyist League Meeting Feb. 11, 1984

About 65 people there – a core of Spartacist activists from the US – their own forces about 23 or 80, incurable ultralefts. A collection of \$325.

Ultraleft nonsense – kooks. If it were Sunday I would have thought it a Sunday School class – chanting of Rah-rah slogans injected periodically into the meeting. They are caught in an incidental suit with ultra-right adversaries. They have escalated it through identifying it with a revival of the KKK in the Southern US due to Reganism, with a struggle against fascism – they are at the head of a serious struggle against racism – fascism – talk about Germany & Hitler.

We support their suit – but not their attempt to escalate it into an allout critical fight against fascism – absurd.

Weisleder-Sherwood there along with Judy Rebick and some oddballs from the union movement. Rebick and Weisleder took their distance because of past attacks on them by TL; hoped this will end – expressed solidarity. I talked of our suit taking on the real enemy, the RCMP & the federal gov't, expressing solidarity with their struggle and their initiative – didn't really differentiate (my)self but from up front position didn't join the sloganizing rah-rah; ended up on the importance of the NDP opposition to the new OSIS bill.

In future I don't think we should bother with them – the atmosphere is so keyed up that the only way any idea could get through is by confrontation and this would turn the meeting into a shambles. Mike Mares seems to be an honest radical worker caught up by them. Scheider – ultraleft – 2 or 3 women and spokesman for TL, a fanatic chair.

*E 2-1709 Wm. O. S. Dowson*  
40 Homewood Ave., #2311  
Toronto, March 10, 1984

Dick Fidler

Dear Dick;

It was good to read your article in the Jan issue of Law Union News. Did you think to send a copy to Svend Robinson in Ottawa? So far as I can ascertain the NDP is taking a much better stand than one could have anticipated. Your article would help strengthen any of them who might want to be strengthened. I do not know whether you happened to come across my article in the last SRDF ~~trans~~sheet. I am sending you a copy. I was a little uneasy about stepping out--after all we are trying to carry the SRDF supporters along--but I think it comes off OK. Let me know what you think. I am also enclosing a copy of Socialist Action. This happens to be the wrong issue--the January one deals with the dumping of the permanent revolution--and has news on the expulsions of a whole slew of the old cadre

socialist greetings

Ross Dowson



Filler ~~to~~ article -

Be forged letters - first <sup>one</sup> addressed to Riddell <sup>(with offers of \$500000)</sup> distributed to ~~some~~ <sup>several</sup>

May 5/80 article says because of a slithering of the US/LSA leaders off the disruptive tactics had little or no effect on sub org - changed their minds on this Riddell  
So obviously fatuous - why didn't RCMP call Courneyear to stand next to witnesses in the rest of the article - harassment on John in MTL

on the up in movement. But it was an attack not just against LSA/YS but the entire left - even if they have been superpowers - they couldn't prevent the impact of the breath of the attack. It was a ~~total attack~~ ~~and~~ ~~to be~~ ~~to~~ ~~travelling~~ ~~attack~~ ~~de~~ - I don't care what kind of commie you are. Direct attack on LSA - but also against En Lutte, and WCP (in struggle) - red rocket. Nothing of those orgs remains.

From Forward June/July/83 -

Collapse of RWL + entire revolve left

B.C. Leftwards Fall 82 ceased publication - Maoists utter collapse  
 Marxist-Leninist Org of Canada (En Lutte - In Struggle) estimated membership of 1,000 activists  
 - larger than any other left formation dissolved itself. On to heels Dec 4/82. Came the  
 blowing up of the Workers Communist Party which in recent times has been able to mobilize as many as 3,000  
 to its rallies - of course the disintegration expressed itself in pol terms ~~but not~~ within  
 these were political reasons - ~~the situation has been the even Canada RCMP assault~~ both ntl & intl but ~~the~~ within  
 that situation has been the even Canada RCMP assault - ~~CP-USA named - type in Wall~~ Maoist org  
 Operation Checonate a continuation of Tent Peg (1969-71) Oddball (1971-72)  
 14 cases outlined in ~~the~~ ~~McDonald Report~~ released in the Fall of 1981  
 According to the report of RCMP Security Services maintaining a names index which in Dec/77  
 had 530,000 entries representing 800,000 files on individuals - ~~between~~ between 1972 and June/77  
 2 yrs after the Trudeau govt imposed the War Measures Act during an alleged apprehended  
 insurrection ~~the~~ 1/2 million new files opened  
 Files not destroyed despite request that they be destroyed  
 recently admitted that

14 cases outlined in the ~~document~~ a continuation of Tent Peg (1969-71) Oddball (1971-72)  
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had 530,000 entries, representing 800,000 files on individuals - ~~between~~ between 1972 and June/77  
2 yrs after the Trudeau Govt imposed the War Measures Act during an ~~alleged~~ alleged apprehended  
insurrection of 1/2 million new files opened  
Files not destroyed despite request that they be destroyed  
recently admitted that

Does not destroyed despite the request that they be destroyed. Still being added to - SS Spitznagel  
recently admitted that anyone seeking information under the new regulations making it possible to seek  
info is having their names automatically added to subversive file  
Cdn Security Intelligence Service set up ~~with~~ C-9, final days of the Trudeau govt  
~~with~~ 90% of the former discredited RCMP security specialists  
incorporated within its staff  
the last day of the Trudeau govt

This is the last chance dealing with the whole period of the scandal of the RCMP with what the Cdn Justice system can clear the mud from its face

⊗ ~~Revers is blocked~~ - Donald Cobb - former FLO call to instruction provided

See Nov/Dec/84 - No RCMP officer has been or ever will be charged as far as federal authorities + every private attorney general offer is concerned other than Quebec

See RCMP w-Down of 49-50 - practical prop out of Krevort - exclude intl security



2) Immediate response - ~~recognition and a band of dismissal~~ - ~~to the letters~~  
familiar - there was again - an irritant  
In reality the real, the full significance has to have time to sink in  
The awesomeness of Checkmate, its scope, its violence is revealed in ~~Operation~~ the some 750 pages of top secret material released in late April 1980 - in advance of the release of the McDonald report itself - 14 cases which officer Gwynne stated he recalled and were only really illustrative x RCMP ~~tried~~ tried to hide scope destroyed all material on file of McD ~~and~~ were reprimanded

~~The whole thing~~ Here we are not treading familiar ground - but witness to something new - and not only in scope, but the horror it reveals about the perilous state of civil rights in this country the shocking manipulative role of the RCMP Security Service

When we come to ~~Case 11~~ Case 11 of the 14 remembered Mr McDonald himself responded in shocked disbelief - that with the cry of protest that the RCMP had driven an unnamed person into exile, in fear for his very life

Mr Caskin's line of questioning + observation ~~it~~ seems clear to me is designed to make out that the RCMP dirty tricks directed at persons + groups of persons of dissident opinion had no real effect on them and the organizations of which they were members no deleterious effect

that Checkmate from the point of view of its partisans did not achieve the purpose that it was designed to achieve - in the words of Mr Chisholm

uses Riddell Courneyour to some effect

Mr Caskin would have it that with the recognition by targeted individuals + organizations that it was the RCMP that was ~~involved~~ the perpetrator the various missions failed to achieve their purpose ~~and~~ - has recorded in this by the testimony of leading RCMPers themselves

I would like to suggest that that is all too quick + simplistic - the truth is that life tells us that it takes a little time for the poisonous brew to work

Unfortunately Operation Checkmate from the point of view of its creators was all too successful and from ~~both~~ Despite all their bravado within a few years the

chief targets and their organizations fell in ruins  
Of course there were other elements in the picture - the end of illusions about Maoism

3 central targets were direct



Forward Group Meeting Wednesday, March 28, 1984, Toronto

Election of Chairperson---Kasher

Election of Secretary--Dowson

Minutes of last meeting not available

Attendance- Dowson, D [redacted] D [redacted], T [redacted] B [redacted] Absent with known reason-b

Membership and contacts- Weisladder of the SPG approached us with regards to circulation of a petition in favor of the arrested Armenians. Dowson moved that we not circulate the petition which calls for their release, an end of police harassment etc etc. They have now been charged with complicity in the terrorist attack on a Turkish Embassy official in Ottawa with the matter of bail being decided in the next day or so. While there is no question as to where our sympathy goes--it is with the national liberation struggle of the Armenians against the Turkish dictatorship--we only have Weisladder's word that they had nothing to do with the Ottawa incident and are not associated with the Armenian terrorists and [redacted] are being framed by the RCMP at the behest of the [redacted] Turkish government. They are now being charged, the evidence will be presented, they have top legal aid in the person of Clayton Ruby. Motion by Dowson that we keep in touch with the situation so that we can move on the matter if and when we think it appropriate--[redacted] agreed. The Weisladder group has now opened up an office on College St and is actively promoting the sale of the US Socialist Action now.

Educational by John D [redacted] on the expulsion from the US Socialist Workers Party now coalescing around the Socialist Action paper- discussion.

Motion by [redacted] that Doctor [redacted] extend the discussion that developed out of the above educational for the next branch meeting- agreed.

NDP. [redacted] Report by T [redacted] on Provincial Council meeting

The Left Caucus publically split on the document Program for Government which was presented to the council. Chris R [redacted] and others scored

the document that the leadership inveigled Ehring and Rosenblum into collaborating in its writing. It was attacked as being all style and no programmatic content. When Rosenblum under the urgings of the chair arose to defend it he was met with [redacted] jeers and catcalls. It was defeated 50 to 44. We will attempt to have a discussion on this compromising action by Rosenblum and Ehring which was supported by others of the Left Caucus--among them Rowles and Hutton. T [redacted] reported on three matters that

demonstrate the party brass is trying to tighten up the machine--convention resolutions are henceforth to be limited to 150 words--a very narrow election committee has been set up-- and the question of slates has not been resolved. The leadership succeeded in carrying out the expulsion of RWLer Tom Baker on the grounds of membership in an opponent political party. Baker carried a strong and effective defense-- after which he informed one of us that they are changing their line and declaring themselves to be a party

Left Caucus noon hour forum on the Laxer document was well attended, generally prestigious for the [redacted] Caucus although there was no time for us to make a contribution in the name of Marxism which Watkins and all the speakers carefully avoided. A saturation distribution of the new Forward was carried out and a display designed to encourage Ontario riding associations to hold an educational around the video-tape of the CITY TV [redacted] program on the Dowson suit was set up in the foyer--[redacted] there were friendly enquiries

Report by Kasher of the situation in his riding and the developing pressure from all fronts that he should accept the presidency even though it is known that he would have limited time to devote to it. Motion that we agree to

Kasher accepting the nomination.

Next meeting- Wednesday April 11.

Report of various events in the next couple of weeks where we will distribute

Forward. We need to be informed of any others coming up



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
961-4554

March 30, 1984

Clerk,  
Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs,  
House of Commons, Ottawa, Ont., K1A 0A6

Claude-Andre Lachance, M.P., Chairman

This letter is to confirm a telephone conversation that I had with you Friday morning March 30.

In the course of that conversation you affirmed that Committee Chairman Lachance would be hearing testimony of witnesses before his committee on the National Security Bill C-9 commencing this coming Monday.

I wish to testify to the committee at the earliest possible date and await notification from your office as to a suitable time for my appearing before its Ottawa hearings.

As I mentioned I have a highly relevant contribution to make to your deliberations as I and the organization which I headed were the only named targets in the evidence that appeared in the RCMP's Operation Checkmate in the report of the Royal Commission headed by Judge McDonald. The Supreme Court of Canada recently ruled unanimously that the Ontario attorney-general exercised "dangerous discretion to circumvent the courts" when he blocked my efforts to lay complaints against the RCMP for violation of my civil rights.

I am looking forward to an early reply.

sincerely

Ross Dowson



(BELOW)  
11/11/84 finished  
Another a new letter  
drafted and sent  
see sent letter  
May 5, 1984

April 15, 1984  
Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2

to-Jeff Mackler & Nat Weinstein (SWP)

Dear Comrades;

I must apologize for not answering your letter much earlier. One of the reasons for delay was an attempt to put my comments more in the framework of the thinking of the comrades in the Forward Group who do not have the time to read International Viewpoint closely ~~formally~~ nor speculate about what appears from time to time in ICP nor even speculate on the gossip that comes ~~in~~ along from time to time from RWL and ex-RWL circles.

We do not have an ongoing relationship with the RWL or any of its members. The developments within the SWP are quite a surprise to us all. It is some years since I have followed the Militant and its supplementary ISR--so we missed the Jeness article of Nov 13, 1981. I have felt for some years now that The Militant has been pretty much of an SWP house organ--a party builder in the narrowest sense of the word completely failing to situate the work of its cadre in the overall developments of the class struggle and therefore of little interest to others than its cadre and currents that it is anticipating might adhere to its cadre. I have continued to follow the ICP fairly closely and have noted from time to time what must be pale reflections of differences that develop in the process of the forces of the FI attempting to apply the program of Trotskyism.

But while we consider ourselves to be Trotskyists we have since we left the LSA ~~xxxx~~ back in 1974 stood on the outside not even looking to identify ourselves with one or the other current in the Fourth International. The primary reason for this hands-off attitude has been our inability to identify ourselves with either of their Canadian supporters--either the LSA(proSWP) which we had left on the grounds that its leadership ~~was bankrupt~~ of which we had been part was bankrupt; or the RMG (Revolutionary Marxist Group) ~~which~~ which identified with the Mandel current which we considered to be ultra-left. Back in 1977 these two groups fused and projected the further possibility of encompassing the Quebec centered Lambertist group-Groupe Socialiste des Travailleurs. \*(and the LSA had degenerated into a sect) That unification of all three major currents of Trotskyism posed a real challenge to our small forces. However as we predicted this unification violated all experiences of our movement and was "an adventure", probably, although we did not say this at the time, dictated by thought-to-be needs of the "international" since it was based on "formal agreements on certain certain fundamental principles rather than capacity to hammer out their application and development in the real world." Two years later found the RWL torn apart and paralyzed and the following year, at its third convention all but two or three of the former RMGs walked out, leaving behind a note to the effect that the RWL was not only a "shattered rump" but a "sect."



Dear Sandy and or Art;

When you come to open this you will find a high quality print of a famous Japanese screen Glories by Suzuki ~~Kit~~ Kiitsu (1796-1858), from the Museum of Art--it is a detail from one of a pair of screens.

(1) I want to give it to my sisters' home--it will be sensational above their fireplace. And if they don't want it I will take it for myself, *although it is beyond my means*

I would appreciate it if you would do it for me. I think it cries out for a very simple frame with no matting at all. There is a small blue strip along the bottom. That can be trimmed so that it sits inside the frame with the full gold backing on display. There is a standard aluminum about 1/2 inch wide available in gold with a dull finish--which I prefer. It should be dry mounted as you can see careless handling has already resulted in some slight crease marks. I think it should also have no glare glass on it. From my limited experience that would bring it into a \$75 to \$95 range.

\* I would like it if at all possible in time for me to hang it on Saturday the 21st of April. Can you squeeze it in? Today is the 15th--how does it look -- *probably Cord could pick it up and bring it down to me x*

① *Although it is beyond my means*



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2

Gandal, Ottawa

Monday, April 23, 1984

Dear Marv:

Gandal, Ottawa

I was more than pleased to receive and read the copy of the brief you sent me.

Possibly Anne told you of my decision not to prepare a brief for the committee. When I phoned the clerk he made it very clear to me that one could appear without a brief. I put that all down in writing in the letter they asked me to affirm my request to appear. Then in their follow-up letter they insisted upon a brief within a few days and made it clear that even so they would only be considering my request to appear leaving the matter quite open.

Now that I see your brief I am more than pleased with the situation. What will be very up front in any publicity that you will receive will be the very broad support that the brief has--it won't be the action of one person, myself--which has been rather disappointing to me over these last few years.

h

I immediately took it up to the print shop to have it set for the next issue of Forward which will run it in full....knowing that set in type and clear column form it may well be useful for the Ottawa committee. Perhaps you will consider putting it out in a nice leaflet for more effective distribution and pressure on the parliamentary committee--it would be particularly useful to circulate in advance to all the NDP members to stiffen their backs

all the best

Ross

Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto M4Y2K2  
April 24, 1984

Fiona Chapman  
c/o Alderman Layton's Office  
City Hall  
Toronto, M5H 2N2

Dear Fiona;

I see you are administering the Toronto Coalition Against C9. Harry Kopyto showed me the letter that went out March 26.

I must say I am disappointed in the line of the letter put out over the name of Copeland and Gemmell. How the committee can take a position of favoring amendments to a bill that would impose a secret state police on the Canadian people is beyond me. From even a civil libertarian view not to speak of a socialist view it has to be opposed in principle.

Although on second thought it is not so surprising as I was quite astonished that the persons who attended the meeting at the aldermans lounge, on March the 8th I think it was, didn't seem to even consider that the NDP was the main area to which we could appeal--what with the very firm and principled position that Robinson has taken in the house and Dan too--I proposed that we attempt to hold a mass meeting inviting Dan- Young and possible Svend that would appeal to the NDP ridings. There was not even a nibble.

Well in this morning's Globe and Mail the editors stood on the left of Toronto Coalition Against C- 9

I think that the Ottawa Committee's approach in their brief to the parliamentary committee is right on. Harry has given Paul a copy but I wonder if you would be so good as to see that Gemmell, Pond and Bill Lewis get copies off your xerox machine

sincerely

Ross Dowson



✓  
April 24, 1984  
40 Homewood Ave., #2311  
Toronto, M4Y2K2

Dear Svend:

No doubt you saw this morning's Globe and Mail editorial April 24.  
If this dirty deed is blocked by the coming election there is no  
doubt it will be due in considerable part to your firm principled stand.  
I am told that Marv Gandle was considerably embarrassed by his failure to  
note the party's efforts in his Canadian Dimension article. Perhaps he  
said something to you to this effect.

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

N.B.  
✓  
In my opinion the NDP's parliamentary spokespersons have so far taken  
a principled line on this critical question--  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
April 24, 1984

Dan Heap, MP

Dear Dan;

I meant to thank you for rushing the copies of Bill C9 to Harry Kopyto and myself a while back. I wasn't able to do what I had hoped with the information. I attended a nucleus of what is called the Toronto Coalition Against C9, to which Fiona is attached, from their masthead. Despite the party's excellent work on this whole question these people dont ~~xxxx~~ understand it as being even a part of a constituency that could form an effective protest in the Toronto area. My suggestion that we approach you and Young , and possibly Svend to organize a mass meeting by appealing to the riding associations, fell on deaf ears.

And I see from the so-called coalition's letter dated March 26 they are for government ammendments of the bill -a position which is even unacceptable to the editors of the G & M April 24 issue. I am enclosing a copy of the Ottawa Committee's very excellent brief for the committee.

I wonder if you would be so good as to put me on the mailing list for a copy of your reports on your doings in the house. The few issue I have seen I thought were quite useful

fraternally

Ross Dowson



2-1984  
The Executions of the Third of May-Goya (caption for prints in Kopye of the DATE)  
took place in 1808, the year of the Napoleonic conquest of Spain. The Spanish ruling class hardly resisted the invasion, the occupation was regarded with minimum concern but the people of Madrid attacked the invaders in the streets--The Second of May. The third of May saw horrendous reprisals -with civilians executed in groups. Here a group of Madrilenos face the firing squad. At their feet spawl human carcasses, while behind them the next lot of victims stands in line--in the distance is the spectral city

t  
Calumny-Boticelli painted 1500

An innocent victim is dragged by the hair to judgement by Calumny carrying a torch--a false symbol of her love of truth. Calumny is attended by two females-Fraud and Deception. The standing male figure dressed in rags is Envy who makes his false accusations to the judge. The Judge along with crown and sceptre has ass's ears. Ignorance whispers into one ear and Suspicion into the other. Truth stands naked on the extreme left ignored, connected with the other figures by a glance from one--Remorse, who regards her with prophetic questioning. The scene has been interpreted as a defence of Savonarola unjustly persecuted by the Borgia Pope.

The Liberation of the Peon-the death of the peon -Diego Rivera  
commemorates the social rescue of the Mexican peasant by the Agrarian revolution. It symbolizes the end of the era of persecution and exploitation and the beginning of liberation--political rights, landownership and education. In the background the hacienda of the landowner goes up in flames. The revolutionists groups around --one cuts the rope that binds his wrists, another gently supports him and the other covers his lifeless body

The Death of Socrates by Jacques Louis David illustrates the idea of self-sacrifice for principle--to the noble cause of the French revolution --the revolutionary spirit-denial in toto of the old regime and a proclamation on new social standards - discipline and control

Daumier

*a beaten up prisoner - officer's comment*  
*la parole de prisonnier*

— Celui-la, on peut le mettre en liberte! il n'est plus dangereux.

— Ne vous y frottez pas- the freedom of the press one

2 lawyers walking down the steps-- Les gens de justice Nr.36

2 lawyers in court along with 4 others --one declaiming to another NO 66  
Les gens de justice Nr 6

— Vous avez la parole, expliquez-vous, vous etes libre

this is the defendant before the judge in a court room restrained by

— 3 lawyers with the judge pompously addressing him, while another defendant is having his head chopped off



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
961-4554

The Editor, Globe and Mail

Just what is Bob Rae telling us when he says "the electorate chose a minority government" on May 2 ?

that

I must admit by then I was getting a bit dizzy from the campaign powered by Tory, Liberal and Bob Ray favorites that at all costs I must choose one of them to the exclusion of all others. But I saw no sign of such a ballot at the poll where I was instructed to cast my vote that had a blank space opposite a designation -For a Minority Government.- mark X here.

Is it possible that the election officers over looked my poll and I should protest such an oversight.

And what as to the legitimacy of this cliff-hanging, behind - the-scenes negotiations by selfappointed teams of party representatives recereating the scrip after the event in a totally heretofore undeclared way. Perhaps that too should be investigated along with the mystery of the missing ballot.

Prior to the vote I arrogantly told everyone who would listen to me just how to cast their vote - that it was crystal clear - ~~that I was voting NDP all the way~~. Now I am humbled and perplexed but for some reason still unprepared to accept a substitute even though Bob is telling me to.

Ross Dowson



22-1709  
Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2  
May 5, 1984

Dear comrades Jeff Mackler and Nat Weinstein; (sup)

Sorry to be so long in answering your letter of a way back in February 28--now over two months ago.

I have little idea of what you know about developments here in English Canada or in Quebec over the recent period aside from your insight from association with comrades in the RWL and now I see you are in contact with Barry Weisleder of the Socialist Workers Collective. As for the Forward Group, I see it is now ten years since we left the RWL

Well the Forward Group is still here-- thanks to its orientation to the labor party-NDP. The RWL has been in a steady process of decline ever since then, with the 1977 fusion of the LSA and RMG only collectivizing that decline of the two FI tendencies. The Lambertists never succeeded in establishing anything of substance ~~in~~ outside of Quebec. Weisleder is attempting to work with a couple of old timers here but I am quite sure it will be unproductive. I understand that there was a scattering of ex-RMGers who survived the 1977 fusion across the West and in B.C.-- and also in Montreal. They put out a magazine for a period but I hear they have given it up. The Montreal people, now out of the Mouvement Socialiste, have just published an issue of a new magazine but I haven't had a chance to examine it and do not know what it represents. Weisleder is in touch with them too.

From the point of view of information on the various Trotskyist groups in Canada Weisleder having been in the RMG and then in the RWL--was he not expelled about a year ago? - is a much better source of information than I am. He is an able and dynamic person although his judgement is another matter. Some would call him ultra left however I find him dogmatic and inflexible.

haven't had

We do not have an ongoing relationship with the RWL or any of its members. The developments within the SWP were quite a surprise to us all. It is sometime since we have followed the Militant and its ISR supplement--so we missed the Jeness article of November 13, 1981. I have felt for some years now that the Militant has been pretty much of an SWP house organ--a party builder in a narrow sense, failing to situate the work of the SWP cadre in the overall developments of the American class struggle and therefore of limited interest to others than its cadre and currents that it is anticipating might come to adhere to it. I have of course continued to follow the LCP and have noted from time to time what must be pale reflections of differences that develop in the process of the forces of the FI attempting to apply ~~their~~ the program of Trotskyism.

Insofar as we knew what the developing differences were, and here HKI can best speak for myself I have long felt that the Mandel forces were more correct than the SWP and associates on the major issues of the world revolution ~~although~~ more orthodox as Trotskyists although very much adapting to ultra leftist pressures--even in the latter days of the Lenin-Trotsky faction. But while we have always considered ourselves to be Trotskyists, since we left the LSA a way back in 1974 we have stood on the outside, not even looking to identify ourselves with one or the other current in the FI. As you will possibly recall we were dropped from the Lenin-Trotsky faction and were scape-goated by the Riddell-Young forces for all the offenses allegedly committed by the LSA documented by Germain in his "In Defence of Leninism: in Defence of the F.I."



bourgeois

Hansen and associates had to get rid of Canadian supporters who were said to be liquidationists if not actually social democrats and both he and Mandel and associates had to get rid of a document that with the support of the New York comrades I had prepared for the world congress dealing with ~~the very real problem of attempting to build the Trotskyist movement where there is a mass labor party formation that reflects to a considerable degree the level of experience (or inexperience) of the class as a whole--dealing with the question of entry sui generis~~(see page 20 of the pamphlet "The Socialist Vanguard and the NDP.")

I gather this problem is still with us--with Tariq Ali in England challenging the whole course of the British section with regards to the Labor Party. And I am sure it has something to do with what has just happened here in Canada. Several comrades of the RWL have just been expelled by the NDP bureaucrats. They ~~had~~ all recently ~~came~~ come out of nowhere to ~~run for~~ seek municipal offices, which the NDP has not been challenging, and presenting themselves as leading NDP activists and members of the RWL. The fact that while they all ~~have~~ have membership in the NDP but play no active role in it whatsoever, appeared as a provocation to the NDP leadership. A couple of years ago I made the summary speech in support of a motion before the Toronto area NDP convention to run a mayoralty candidate and almost won a majority after convincing the most prominent leftist to just lend us his name as a possibly candidate. But to get to the point--here we are protesting the expulsions of some RWLers with one of the key arguments in the defence being that they do not represent an opponent political party when the prosecuted tell us that they are indeed changing their name from League to party--- They are also indulging in the most bizarre attacks on the NDP leadership ~~as~~ as we noted in the pamphlet "The Subversion on the revolutionary socialist orientation to the NDP..." the most recent being the Manitoba NDP's failure to overcome the racist Tory's blockage of their attempts to establish francophone language rights from which they come out of smelling roses. I gather they think that the NDP parliamentary caucus should have called on the military arm of the state to force the Tories to attend the sessions so they could be voted down

Several years ago we and others succeeded in pulling together a modest core of NDPers who constituted themselves as the Ontario NDP Left Caucus. Last year ~~the caucus~~ on the fiftieth anniversary of the CCF-NDP the party brass presented a new Manifesto completely violating the leftist founding manifesto. Some of us felt that the presentation of a counter-manifesto was premature and in the light of the limited experiences of the Left Caucus with one another would lead to a process of differentiation rather than consolidation. When the majority decided that we should present a counter-manifesto we went right along with it doing all in our power to make it really an effective socialist minifesto which we succeeded in doing. A group of RWLers visited the final debate which the Forward comrades carried against an odd-ball assortment of ultra-leftists. The RWLers played no role at all. Weisleder in my opinion padded to the ultra leftists. Subsequently at the annual meeting of the Left Caucus where we finally succeeded in structuring it with an elected Steering Committee, Weisleder further attempted to polarize the situation ~~and~~ only succeeding in purging themselves from the Steering Committee with only the Forward forces voting for them. Only the Forward group of the Trotskyists is playing any role in the anti-nuclear arms movement here---and in the NDP Anti-war committee in the Toronto area. You will see from the last Forward that this Anti-Cruise testing movement with the all-out support of the trade union leadership and with the NDP saying all that is necessary to say that this is indeed a significant development

All the revolutionary tendencies in Canada have been undergoing a decline. There is now no Maoist press other than the pro-Albanian lunatic pro-Albanian CPC of Canada (ML). The only left current in the NDP is the Ontario Left



Caucus. The socialist left which was long concentrated in BC and Saskatchewan has succumbed to environmentalism. The CP which has been steadily declining in influence has undergone a modest revival with the ~~xx~~ growth of the anti-nuclear arms movement--but modest--it is generally discredited. And from the passivity of the BC Federation of Labor delegates--the broadest representative movement where the ~~xxx~~ CP retained trade union influence, in the face of lack of protest to the recent blatant sell-out of a key struggle in BSI can only gather that it is really on the skids there too--See last issue of Forward back page. The International Socialists have a scattering of activists across the country - but they are somewhat juvenile. My clear impression is that the struggle in the SWP finds the RWL firmly behind the Barnes forces which have been running the show here for sometime now--and while we said back in 1974 that the leadership was "bankrupt" I think that we have to conclude that there is little if anything <sup>there</sup> for Trotsky <sup>ist</sup>

And what about the Forward Group? Well as I said earlier--we are still here. We have lost forces since 1974. At that time we were in our majority the older more experienced comrades. We have got older and have not been able to recruit many younger comrades. Our dozen or so comrades are all in NDP ridings which provide varied possibilities for socialist propaganda. We are pretty much limited to Toronto, which is, (not Montreal) the political center of Canada. Forward has a modest subscription base but is circulated on a truly mass scale at any event of importance to the left in Southern Ontario. Our biggest achievement in the ~~xxxx~~ recent period is the suit being waged in my name against the RCMP. It is even astonishing to me to see that our line of non-amendment, frontal rejection of the projected legislation re-establishing the federal political police may well succeed in blocking the Ottawa government from reconstituting the RCMP SS before the coming federal election. I am enclosing a copy of an Ottawa committee statement which echoes Forward written ~~by~~ I think by an ex-LSA who is in full collaboration with us in the Ontario NDP Left Caucus. The NDP is taking a line which I would not thought possible for a parliamentary socialist group.

The comrades are now vowing to put the publication of Forward on a more regular basis. The comrades are stimulated by your unanticipated appearance. We decided not to really do as we wished--marshall to the defence of the permanent revolution but to satisfy ourselves at this stage with the small somewhat cryptic box on page 5 of the last issue. As you would conclude the RWL and its press-English and French-, has said nothing about this development.

Which reminds me that you sent me a small bundle of the wrong issue of your paper. I wanted 10 copies of the issue ~~xxxx~~ which carried a major article on defence of the permanent revolution. Alas here I am again ~~xx~~ separated from the file of Socialist Action so I cannot tell you the number of the issue. And I have been informed that the comrade who does your mail left off the apartment numbers of the subs that go the 40 Homewood Ave here in Toronto.--which amounts to a small town. My number -Dowson is #2311, Gray is #912 and Darling is #911

with revolutionary greetings

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2k2

May 14, 1984 ✓

Howard Brown  
1051 McNiven Ave.,  
Regina, Sask

Dear Howard:

I should have written you long ago to thank you for the pile of material and interesting comments on the problems of the left in the Sask NDP. Unfortunately I was unable to use any of it--but have put it away on file.

My cryptic comment on the SWP was necessarily so because of the lack of information. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Since then much has come through via the pages of Socialist Action published from San Francisco. Probably you saw the cryptic box in the last Forward reporting Barnes' words on the permanent revolution along with the address of the paper -- cryptic because we did not want to get into the whole question of the permanent revolution other than to suggest that we do not discard this key concept of Trotskyism

It would now appear that there are two minorities in the SWP circle--the Trotskyist tendency of Nat Weinstein and Lynn Henderson and the FI Caucus of Frank Lovell and George Breitman. A recent SWP Party Organizer lists a considerable number of comrades who you will recognize, as "splitters" among them George Wisman, Jean Tusser, Les Evans, Evelyn Sell etc etc.

But the immediate reason for my sending you this note is to forward to you a document that Al Goldstein has drawn up for Camp Poundmaker so that the books can be brought up to date. I gather that you were a shareholder for the TSS&ES which share is to revert to Camp Poundmaker Incorporated. I wonder if you would sign at the appropriate place and return it to me so that I can return it, along with others that Lomas is tracing, to the lawyer.

Thanks for your immediate attention

comradely

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave ,  
Toronto M4Y2K2  
May 18, 1981. ✓

ONDP Convention Arrangements Committee

Dear Brothers and Sisters;

I will be attending the Hamilton convention this coming month, as a delegate from St George.

Aside from participating in the official functions of the convention I wish to acquaint the delegates with the most recent developments around my suit against the RCMP. As you probably know the federal convention along with many ridings and practically every labour council across Canada has endorsed the suit. The Socialist Rights Defence Fund which has been sustaining the suit now has available copies of an excellent video-tape of a five part program featured by City-TV which I would like to show at the convention so that riding officials could see it and decide as to its suitability for being shown at their riding this fall.

The SRDF supporters and myself would be grateful if some space could be allocated at some strategic place close to the convention assembly hall where I would be able to set up a TV set through which I could show the film on a running basis so that those delegates interested to see it in whole or in part.

I would appreciate your recognizing receipt of this note as I have to make arrangements in Hamilton in advance to rent the necessary equipment and display stand.

in solidarity

Ross Dowson



*(Notes to self & notes on meeting dated June 20/84)*

Simon R. & Left Caucus NATO position

From the Left Caucus appeal to the 1984 Ontario Convention June 1984

From the Draft Manifesto for the NDP, submitted by the Ontario Left Caucus, March 1983

Reproduce section Peace & World Justice

***We mobilize all the forces at our disposal to turn back all efforts to dump our party's longstanding out-of-NATO policy and the scrapping of our pivotal pro-peace platform***

While reaffirming

A New Democratic government will (Collegially) endorse HK's submission:

“Dumping our NATO position will undermine the NDP's authority in the peace movement, demoralize the rank & file, further blur our distinct image in the public mind, provide political support for a Tory swing towards Reagan's militaristic policies, derail important sectors of the independent mass peace movement & eventually undermine the leadership of the NDP itself. We should not let it happen”

(K & S sign)

Defending the NDP as the anti-war party (...)

Do we have a real split – E & R. going to go on a Left Caucus slate.

-- are they going to agree to identify with the Left Caucus. Can we use them?

-- is the left caucus going to present a slate under such conditions ?

why would we open the split to the convention – and what about Barry, Dale, etc.

-- are they going to dissociate (them)selves from (the) statement. Can we leave this to the first meeting of the Left Caucus or do we need to go ahead

-- can Wayne be intermediary

I think it is better for left caucus to just involve itself in a floor fight than to get into anything like a leadership struggle

Let's call a Steering Cttee meeting as soon as possible; first item would be editing or not of statement – that should smoke out – what my queries to Laura failed to do

(...)



Notes on Meeting: ONDP Left Caucus Wednesday June 20/84 at Ont Legislature

Continuation of Thurs. June 14 meeting

Lois Bedard chaired, RD volunteered to take notes for Steering Cttee

Bedard reported (Weisleder) can't attend this meeting but spoke to her of his opinion of document. He thought it was a good document but would like to see it adjusted – 3 lines top of page 2 dealing with idea of “repatriation” of Canadian economy now distorted by US economic domination responsible for much of our structural unemployment. Thinks it should clearly define problem as due to capitalist (Canadian) ownership and distortion of economy

Someone pointed out that in their opinion the next 2 lines tend to straighten out any misimpression – repatriation from Canadian capitalist ownership

--Weisleder also questioned use of term “non-aligned powers” as those an NDP government would ally itself with

Considerable discussion whether “powers” should be changed to “nations” & whether Non-Aligned should be capitalized to signify those countries that claim to be outside of either the so-called Western & so-called Eastern blocs

--Susan Shaw told someone present that she thought the document should be shortened. In this respect Wayne Roberts suggested TPs #3 & #4 could be cut out

--Ross D reported that Muni Taub wanted to insert in pp.10 which deals with mass movements of protest which we should lead a couple of lines on the rent control movement. He told RD that he spoke to Dale Martin about this and Martin agreed to work out a few lines on this and the resolution going to the convention Housing Task Force p. 43 in book. Dale is supposed to contact Dowson who will turn it over to Steering Cttee when Martin calls him to pick it up.

--Suggestion by Tomczak in P3 where we talk of the party leaderships' support of Liberals in Constitution debate that we use 3 Ontario experiences – abortion policy, Quebec independence, separate school question – Wayne adds – not Quebec but the (apartment) house trust (company) scandal  
Suggest we remove word “entire” – line 3 para. 9 and change “must” to “should” lines 4 & 6, para 7

It was noted that it is possible that Ottawa has already adopted it as it is and changes can complicate the presentation of a common document. It was agreed that the document is generally satisfactory as is and in this spirit

Doctorow – proposed that we not endorse or run table officers

Material on Davis school proposals circulated but no time to discuss

(ends)



Ross Dowson, Toronto

July 8, 1984

Dear Lucy Kershaw, RR #1, Victoria Harbour, Ont.

Art's missing the bus today due to the change in schedule forcefully jolted me to recall I have not thanked you on behalf of the Forward Group for the \$5 donation Art turned over a month or so ago. A very welcome contribution towards paying off the issue that we are now working on.

And how does this fine summer find you? I am only now resting up from the hectic days of the Ont. NDP convention in Hamilton last weekend, and hauling some accumulated goods out to the Camp at Salmon Arm (River) near Napanee.

The convention was a good experience. I have for some while felt that the Ontario Left Caucus was premature – based at this time largely on the tiny Forward Group and an uneasy alliance of left reformists some of whom see it as a lever to blackmail the Ontario leadership into giving them token recognition. Well – now after last weekend I think it has arrived. We went into the affair rife with gossip and uneasy feelings. But out of the conflict we presented for the first time a Left Caucus slate of 6 persons for the provincial executive – 3 men & 3 women for the Metro Toronto area. The new voting system that required regional representation and 50% women helped us. We were the only real slate and our Mary Rowles got 290 votes. Our unknown Angie Codina even got 130 – of the men our Fred Gligler got 164 votes (he got youth votes too) with Gord Doctorow of Forward getting 118. There were independent Left Caucus people who also ran but they didn't do nearly so well as the official Left Caucus slate.

Of course the Brass ran the show but our Marv Gandal and Gord Doctorow took up the shorter work week for the same take home pay to win jobs for all. The Brass steamrollered the resolution off the floor but I see the Globe & Mail columnist interprets the catch-all 4 or 5 resolutions that were recommended to knock out an excellent resolution passed by Marv's riding as committing the party to the best positions as Stephen Lewis was embarrassed (to admit, and) committed (the party) several years back to a \$4 minimum wage. And we helped carry the ball on Nicaragua.

Of course everything was hotted up for the election but it seems that we will have a federal one before taking on the Ontario Tories. I think the NDP will hold on since the Libs and Tories are both presenting corporation lawyers with different labels.

All the best --- Ross



Socialist Rights Defence Fund  
50 Thorncliffe Ave.,  
Toronto, Ont. M4K 1V5  
July 23, 1984

Ted Mann, despt of sociology or  
c/o Audio Visual Dept  
Trent University, Peterborough, Ont.

Dear Ted;

*July 20/84*  
I am glad that you phoned your request direct to my apartment. You forced me to break the log-jam of failed promises that several persons borrowing the tapes have created by not returning them. I got three more copies made and now they are all out. I sent a copy to the above address on Saturday last. I am hoping you can make copies that can be deposited for loan at any video-tape libraries you are acquainted with. The staff down at Citytv would be pleased. It had quite an impact on them in the process of making it. I think that it comes off well. I would appreciate hearing your opinion. The theme is going to be very much with us in the future now that they have legalized the illegalities under the new Security Service.

While the endless court delays are killing interest in our suits they are still very much alive even though at the same place our last tear sheet reported them. We are slated to go before the Ontario Supreme Court on August 14th, 10:30, Osgoode Hall. Perhaps you woy like to see Carlie Roach handling this phase.

I am hoping that the excellent last ditch fight that the NDP parliamentary caucus waged against the Security bill heralds a shift in the direction of utilizing parliament as a tribune to the people

Could you get your viewers to comment on the tape and sent it in when you return it?

fraternally

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2  
July 29, 1984

Dick Prinsep  
Haro St  
Vancouver, B.C.  
V6G2

Ruth Bullock (?)

Dear Dick:

a

Plesantly supriised to hear your voice over the phone and from Toronto too, so soon again.

I am enclosing a copy of the leaflet that I told you about promoting the video-tape that was produced by City TV. Ofcourse you have to have a machine that will show it through a TV set. These machines are quite common now as many prople are making tapes of program that they want to keep for some future showing. I am sure they are quite easily rented from many outfits in Vancouver. Of course it is quite a professional job, colour, dramatic music and all.

All four of the SRDF tapes are out right now--in Kitimat, Peterborough, Montreal and Moose Jaw. We are expecting a couple of returns anyday now. Just give me a couple of weeks to deliver in time for any showing that you can get arranged

I am working on the new fact sheet. The next event willbe ~~an~~the appeal to the Supreme Court of Ontario August 14, 10:30 Osgoode Hall . We will go to press right after so that we can cover that. The new date for the Small Claims Court has not been set

I am wondering how Ruth knows about or what she knows about the expulsions of Breitman and others. The SWP convention is over August 4 and 10 in Oberlin. Is she going? It would be very good if she were able--and do any other Vancouver RWLers agree with her--it would be interesting to know. I have just finished reading some 6 internal bulletins put out by Lovell-Breitman . Their expulsion which is sure to be upheld by the convention will by no means end the matter. They are going to defend the SWP tradition against Barnes and compyn to teir last ~~xxx~~ gasp and I dont doubt even though they will be expelled also others will support them. Then there is the Socialist Action Group which has been puting out some valueable material including Mandel's reply to Barnes on the Workers and Farmers governmtn Probably Ruth has a copy of that. Possibly she would be prepared to loan it to you. Does Ruth know what is happening in Toronto? Since the RWL tops are co-editors of the New International which published Barnes attack on the permanent revolution, ~~xxx~~ on the 80-90 % of the world Trotskyists who he smears as inurable ultra-lefts



and from what little I hear there must be considerable unease among those who are left in the RWL. There is not the slightest doubt that Riddell-Steele go right down the line with the US expulsions. What is to happen to Ruth and any who agree with her. Does she think that any dissident RWLers have any perspective of fighting back, of pulling something together and reconstituting the movement around Forward or whatever. I would very much like to know.

Yes it would be very good if she were able to go ~~the~~ to the SWP convention. ..and if you were able to convince her if she is along and hesitant about seeing the whole thing through. I am thinking of writing to her--what do you think?

I don't know of anyone in the RWL here. I really crossed swords with Lynda Little(?) and Tony deFelice at the Hamilton NDP convention. They convinced several ridings with our support to protest the expulsion of a couple of their people. By the resolutions were not prioritized by the convention arrangements committee so to get them on the floor you would have to appeal to the committee beforehand. So I went over to them and told them that I would as a delegate like to appear with them so seek the prioritization of the issue. You can imagine my surprise when they said they were not going to do anything at all about this. Shortly before the convention when Harry K defended them at Parkdale ~~the~~ along the line that they were not an opponent political party by an RL League one of them told him that ~~they~~ they were now calling themselves a party. I know they have been talking of themselves as a party in their press but it appears that they don't want to use that classical line of left wingers to argue their defence. They demonstratively distributed a statement on their electoral campaign on the first day of the convention--what is it--five candidates. Tony and Lynda told me that they had decided not to press the issue onto the floor. It appears as anyone would have guessed that their announcing five 5 candidates who will incidentally be running against NDPers in key ridings smashed what support there was to protest the expulsions. I told them that I by no means agreed to their dropping the matter even though their actions certainly jeopardized any defence ~~which~~ or protest and I forced the matter onto the Left Caucus meeting floor. Tony got up and mumbled a few words which were largely to the effect that we could win it---as if we didn't know that from the start. And when I said it was a matter of principle that the expulsions should not be let go by without protest Dale Ritch shouted out to the effect that what the hell did I care when they didn't care. Of course so of the caucus had never wanted to protest--and that finished the matter.

Yes, it would be very good to find out Ruth's feeling as to where to go from here.

sincerely

Ross D



prepared Fri Aug 17/84

Feld Election

R.D.

for Louis B's use at Broadbent banquet!

- 1 It is indeed suprising to hear our spokespersons advance as our answer to the grave concerns of the tens of thousands unemployed, and in particular the youth, the proposal of government loans through a Youth Opportunity Fund so presumably they can try their hand at capitalist entrepreneurship. But isn't the Canadian economy one of the most monopoly ridden in the world and isn't a major feature of the crisis that now grips us the continuing and accelerating process of its monopolization through the collapse of the small entrepreneurs both in the city and country? Why are we now spreading illusions about the system of "free enterprise", of capitalism, instead of ~~expressing~~ as we have traditionally done expressing the need for public ownership and a planned economy under the control of "ordinary Canadians"?

Mr Broadbent- you have called Mr Turner and Mr Mulroney the Bobsey twins--both lawyers for Canadian corporate interests which control the Canadian economy in junior partnership with the U.S. corporate elite

By that token one concludes that the Liberal and Progressive Conservative party machines which they head are really controlled and their programs, no matter what the Bobsey twins say they are at a given time, are in reality programs tolerable to these same interests. Hence we can have no confidence in them.

But what about our party, its program and its leadership? I haven't heard you define them in the course of this ~~campaign~~ campaign. Why should Canadians have confidence in the NDP. What is the character of ~~our~~ our party, its program and its leadership that should give this confidence.?

A shorter work-week with no cut in take-home-pay has been adopted by the Canadian Labour Congress in convention as a key answer to the unemployment that ravages Canada - and was a central theme in the deliberations of our recent Ontario convention. This idea has been notably absent in our publicity and you are reported to have recently said that we have to leave this matter to the bargaining process between employer and employee. This Friday over a widely heard program on CBC Radio Mr Caplan even praised the dumping of this concept as making our party credible and alleging that this was the secret of our doing well in the campaign.

What about the hundreds of thousands of working people who are not unionized and subject to the work week as defined under provincial and federal legislation? Isn't a legislated shortening of the work week a challenge to our parliamentary representative? And in whose eyes does our failure to advance what we know is a solution make us credible? ---the eyes of the Liberal and Tory politicians who want us to appear more and more undifferentiated from themselves and their concept of what politics should be.? The Dumping of such ideas undermines our credibility--even among ourselves and rendering us just like the other politicians, weakens our support among the electorate.



to  
Our parliamentary caucus opposed the bitter end the mandate of the  
Canadian Security Intelligence Service which legalizes all the ille  
galities committed by the RCMP against legitimate dissent.  
We warned that Canadians would come to rue the day that "in the  
name of protecting our national security" the government forced through  
legislation "which could ultimately destroy our fundamental civil  
liberties and privacy."

Would you comment on this week's revelations of the witchhunt  
ruling that has been used to harass civil servant Jack Gold.



September 13, 1984

Ross Dowson



Forward  
Box 778, Adelaide St., P.O.  
Toronto M5C 2K1  
Sept 24, 1984

Peter Solonysznyj  
1276a St. Zotique  
Montreal, Quebec

Dear friend;

to Labour Focus

After some confusion over a subscription that I sent to England ~~for~~ I finally got a couple of copies together in the mail and then heard no more. Glancing ~~through~~ the Summer 1983 issue I came across your name as the Canadian contact. I tried to phone you but you are not listed as having a phone.

I would like to take out a subscription to Labour Focus. Could you send me a copy of the latest issue that you have...and if you will tell me the cost of a sub I will take out a new one through you, return mail

of a leaflet

I am enclosing a copy that Steve Dankovitch and I put out and distributed at the Labor Day parade here in Toronto and arranged for another friend to distribute at the St Catharines parade and to the Polish community that shops on Roncesvalles on Saturdays here in Toronto. Are you in touch with the Solidarnosc News that the NA office circulates from its Toronto office. See leaflet. And with Across Frontiers Box 2382 Berkeley Calif? And do you have the address of the group which publishes a bulletin in Edmonton, Alta.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto--961-4554  
Sept 20, 1984

Law Union News--Editor

Dear friend;

I was just speaking to your associate Harry Kopyto. He suggested that I drop over to you a copy of a Socialist Rights Defence Fund circular that has just come out. He thinks that you may want to consider condensing the article on the NDP's fight against the new SIS--or the article dealing with the stage where my suit against the RCP rests.

You are very welcome to utilize this material in any way that you choose

sincerely

Ross Dowson



marked: "first draft"  
"not sent"

Forward  
Box 778, Adelaide St. P.O.  
Toronto M5C 2K1  
October 3, 1984

Wilde  
319 Wardlaw Ave., Winnipeg, Man

Dear Kimberly

Welcome to your new abode--I would imagine that this is the first letter (aside from bills) that you have received there. I got your address from Harry who told me you should be in by the time this note arrived--and in good time too because I had a long telephone conversation with Mitch on Monday afternoon and following a hurried up consultation meeting with Harry and Gord last night I am rushing to get these few comments into your hands.

Mitch told me ~~quite~~ quite a bit about his latest political plans his organization of a three day get-together November 9, 10, and 11 there in Winnipeg under the auspices of a national agenda committee-- its aim, to form a Trotskyist "party" a year or so from now. He said he pressed the committee to invite me to come from the Forward Group and that he will be phoning me back within a few days to get my answer--of course I told him that we would have to have a discussion about this matter with our group which is not meeting until after the Thanksgiving day weekend.

Long ago I learned despite my enthusiasm for the idea that all those who think of themselves as Trotskyists should find ways to get together--not to immediately ~~to~~ respond to such propositions as Mitch enthusiastically outlined to me. We have to temper our responses in the interests of, once invoking such enthusiasms, our actions are directed to seeing that everything possible, all things done serve to assure as much as possible that it comes off successfully and that ~~we do not end up setting us far far back from where we are now.~~ instead of taking us forward in the direction we wish to go it doesn't blow up in our faces ~~and~~ and end up setting us far far back from where we ~~are~~ even are now.

There has been a very recent experience that is worth recalling --just a couple of years ago here in Canada and elsewhere there was a big effort to bring together under one banner those Trotskyists who identified with the SWP leadership in the 4th International and those tendencies that identified with the Mandel or the European Trotskyist leadership which ~~in many countries~~ while they adhered to the central bodies sustained separate organizations in many countries. Here in Canada ~~there~~ there was a "unification" of the comrades of the Revolutionary Marxist Group who supported the Mandel current and the comrades of the League for Socialist Action from which only a few years earlier we have pulled out. The basis of unity seemed to be quite substantial. It was apparent that they agreed on what we would call the fundamental principles of Trotskyism--on the need ~~for~~ for a revolutionary vanguard party, for a political revolution in such countries as Poland, support ~~the~~ the anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World--in general--the theory of the permanent revolution. Very, very substantial grounds for unification --indeed how could they long possibly stay apart. When they got together I gather they constituted 150 to 200 comrades. But in a couple of years they had divided into half a dozen tendencies. Of the prominent RMGs only Steve Penner survived--Judy Rebeck, Varda Burstyn, Dick Fidler, Ernie Tate, in fact almost 5/8ths of them had dropped out and the process



disintegration continues. When they announced the unification I wrote a fair sized article in Forward. You did not have to be very knowledgeable to predict as I did--that it was an adventure and almost doomed to destruction from the start. While it appeared that they agreed on fundamental principles, the past years experiences proved that they did not share a common view as to how to work with these principles and in fact that as separate entities they had never shown that they knew how to work together when it was necessary to do so. When I met Dick Fidler a couple of years later he told me that I would never be able to full appreciate how lucky I was that I did not have to go through the factional hellish squabbles that he and others had in the united organization. The unification far from adding to its combined forces of many talented people, new forces gained from more effective employment of their larger numbers, resulted what is not far from their mutual destruction. Some of the persons that Mitch is trying to pull together are remnants of that unification experience. I don't know whether that experience was ever documented by any of them so the lessons could be learned but it should be, and subject to serious discussion. ~~Amgiam-~~



Mitch seems to figure that recent developments in the SWP stimulate the possibilities for success. A considerable number of comrades were brutally expelled. But they are now constituted in 2 groups. The group around a paper Socialist Action in San Francisco and a group calling themselves Fourth Internationalist Tendency, both ~~number~~ long time and very experienced Trotskyists in their ranks.

~~include~~

3-----

These two groups are divided on their attitude towards ~~xxx~~ the necessary tactical orientation to the SWP. Barry Wessledder of Toronto and his 7 persons that Mitch says he has here are all gung ho for the Socialist action group--whereas I tend to be more favorable to the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. The former is already acting very much like an independent and opposition party to the SWP, whereas the latter has an attitude more like Trotsky and the Left Opposition first adopted to the world ~~communist~~ (subsequently completely Stalinized) communist parties. Mitch says the 4th internationalist tendency is holding a conference in the next month in Minneapolis and the Fourth International ~~xxxxxxx~~ to which both of these groups would possibly be addressing themselves also is holding its world congress in Europe within months.

It seems to me what with these developments right up on the agenda the times are out of wack for us to get caught up with unity talks here. I would very much like to



Winnipeg Conference — <sup>notes</sup> from out of Mitch Podolock phone call  
Monday Oct 2/84

A conference slated in Winnipeg over Nov-9, 10 and 11  
Strike of a NCL agenda committee

aim is to form a Trotskyist "party" a year or so from now  
people around Mitch + now Kimberley in Winnipeg

- have good connections with Gauche Socialiste which he claims has 70 members — are Mandel supporters they will be sending 2 persons
- good connections with Weisleder + Socialist Workers Collective who Mitch says have 7 people in Toronto
- good connections with Socialist Challenge — Vancouver Gary Crystal 5 in Edmonton
- connections with a state cap group in Brandon

it is

Socialist

- Robby Mahood

will phone for my answer as to whether I will be there

~~we feel  
tender~~

Mitch appears to be very much involved with Weisleder  
and with US — So Action

Says that 4th intlist Tendency is meeting shortly in Minneapolis

- Doesn't know date of World Congress of FI — nor about the proposal at Oberlin SWP

My line is that it is all premature — all more we have little common experience  
and the instability of the present movement — we are all for peace in SWP

- I regret that they have moved out and with a 3 day conference before the air is more clear thro the settlement of 2 situations which may result in a more favorable context for a coming together and a collaboration
- We already have an experience with Weisleder who would appear to be a major factor in this Winnipeg conf.
- No documents have been prepared, but Barry wouldn't go into it — left Caucus out experience disagreement on election
- we don't have a common experience — problem with LSA + RAG only of good or fundamental principles strategic orientation US fashion work

We could send a statement to conf

Write to Kimberley seeing Mahood who works in NDP + Gary Whalen who Harry  
Spaint says in key left NDPer



(final draft - same date)

Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
October 3, 1984

Kimberley Wilde  
319 Wardlaw Ave.,  
Winnipeg, Man

Dear Kimberley

Welcome to your new apartment. I would imagine that this is still among ~~your~~<sup>the</sup> first letters that you have received at this address. I got it from Harry and in good time too as there is a matter of considerable importance that has been posed by a long conversation I had with Mitch on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday we managed to arrange a hurried up meeting of Harry K, Gord and myself as Mitch told me that he would be phoning back probably Thursday or Friday to get some response from this end. I am anxious that you should get some of our opinions as I would imagine that Mitch is steamrollering along. It has to do with Mitch's latest efforts to pull several of the diverse Trotskyist currents together. He told me that a meeting is well underway to be held there in Winnipeg over November 9, 10, 11 under the auspices of a national agenda committee with the aim of forming a Trotskyist party within a year or so. He said he pressed the committee to ~~come~~<sup>have me</sup> as representing the Forward Group. I of course told him that I would raise the matter with our comrades who will not be holding a regular meeting ~~until~~<sup>until</sup> sometime after the Thanksgiving day weekend.

Of course ways must be found to get the process of overcoming our divisions as soon as possible. However the timing and the circumstances are most important to be sure that the process gets underway with the best possibilities of assuring success. Our first impressions without the benefit of your views is that the circumstances right now are by no means the most favorable.

I gather that Mitch is impressed by the <sup>US</sup> Socialist Action group. You recall that several months ago I circulated copies of their San Francisco paper among the comrades. But the first thing ~~important~~ to note is that this group is one of two groups ~~that~~ composed of comrades who have been expelled out of the SWP--the other being the Fourth Internationalist Tendency. The SWP has just come out of its Oberlin convention which no doubt finally expelled both groups. I heard that Weisleder was down at Oberlin so I phoned him but he has not responded. I have not read any report of Oberlin or any analysis or projection by either ex-SWP current. Mitch said that the FI Tendency is gathering in Minneapolis in the next couple of weeks. ~~Now~~ I understand that the Fourth International will also be holding its congress shortly. So the whole situation with regards to the ~~internationalist~~<sup>US</sup> splits in the US is still very much up in the air both regards to the relation between the two expelled groups and with regards to relations with the F.I.



At this time the differences between the two US groups are not without significance. The Socialist Action Group has a far more independent stance than the FI Tendency. The latter functions very much like the early Left Opposition did with regards to the Communist Parties. It was clearly oriented to win back its rights within the CP's and held this position until we concluded, ~~in~~ what with the debacle of the German CP before Hitler that the CP's were beyond reform and issued the call for the structuring of independent parties challenging them for the leadership and launched the Fourth International. The FI tendency is still oriented to win back its place in the SWP but Socialist Action groups has a much more independent stance. Barry Weisleder very quickly identified their Socialist Workers Collective with the SA group which has made big public gestures of identity with it--listing their various Canadian addresses as outlets ~~for~~ for SA, publishing their material on the Armenian prisoners etc. The La Gauche group that Mitch talks about I think is the outgrowth of the old RMG and it would appear that it has firm relations ~~with~~ with the Mandel current in the FI. It carried out an "entry" into the Mouvement Socialiste of Quebec which did not go anywhere. What its relations with the FI are, is not clear to me. ~~My impression is that~~ Then Mitch talks about the Socialist Challenge people in Vancouver, Edmonton and a couple of other places who come out of the RMG---ones who never went into the LSA here in Canada a few years back or ones who pulled out of the failed fusion of the Canadian LSA and RMG

This latter experience, the attempted fusion of the LSA (without us) and the RMG is a very important one that needs to be evaluated. When that unification was announced we wrote up an article in Forward. They fused on the basis that they were in agreement on fundamental principles. But we said that this fusion was "an adventure" on the grounds that we knew that they had no common experience of working together and that the RMG group was ultra left with the LSA group being sectarian and dogmatic. For that fusion to have worked those two groups would have had to have an extended period of close collaboration in the major areas of the radicalization to lay a basis for it. The unfortunate result ~~of~~ was that in a relatively short time the RWL became a hot bed of factional disputes, blew up with only one of the leading RMGers Steve Benner surviving in the RWL--the rest such as Varda Burstyn, Judy Robick going their own ways with Weisleder finally coming out to form SWC. I have never seen an evaluation by any of them of that experience which could be quite valuable in telling us how to go now

The Forward Group has already had an experience in the main area of our work, the NDP, with the Weisleder forces here--7 according to Mitch which must include at least three from the old Lambertist group around Bob Sherwood. We had it in the left caucus. They have a completely different line to us. We have a long range orientation of trying to build a broad left within the NDP at the same time with the aid of our press and group classes etc of building the Forward Group. Weisleder and coy are trying to build an explicitly Trotskyist faction in the NDP on the basis of their full Trotskyist program. They were in frontal opposition to the Left Caucus manifesto that we prepared for the national convention--it was not radical enough for them. They were opposed ~~to~~ the draft we prepared for the Ontario convention--particularly Dale although Barry pulled back on this later. When it came to forming the Left Caucus steering committee they presented a statement that challenged the Robert and Ehrings who responded by a counter campaign to exclude Barry and Dale who had presented a full slate excluding Roberts and Ehring. We called for the inclusion of both forces on the committee



An explicit Trotskyist left wing in the NDP at this time would encompass only ourselves and a few others while we know that there is a basis for a broader one which would give us an area in which to work. That experience with the Socialist Workers Collective upon which Mitch seems to count heavily on does not speak well for an effective collaboration for us in the main area of work. There are others such as the Armenian prisoners defence that Barry is carrying into the pages of Socialist Action but we can take that up later if necessary.

Mitch also talks of some State Caps in Brandon. Their main forces are in Toronto around International Socialism. They do not have any concept of critical support of the NDP let alone building a left caucus within it. In my opinion they are a group of ~~naive~~ revolutionary activists--worker-ists--go-go unionists with little possibilities if any, despite all their efforts building any effective forces in the unions.

We think that the situation that Mitch is trying to move us all into is premature to say the least. That these various groups need to have some common experiences through which their concepts of party building can be tested and sorted out--to see if we can even live together in a common organization let alone build something that we would agree upon. We don't want to emphasize the differences but we want to become aware of any that exist to see what we can agree on and what we can ~~dis~~ disagree on and yet live with, allowing life ~~to~~ itself to work out.

Harry, Gord and I came to a common understanding that we would not send anyone to this November conference but that at this time we would send our good wishes ~~for~~ some successes to its aim and ~~to~~ to it some of the problems as we see them. If we had any substantial influence we would propose that it be postponed until after the World Conference and ~~when~~ there is a clearer picture of what is happening in the US situation. Such a postponement and the circulation ~~of~~ among us of relevant material from each group would best serve ~~the~~ to bring progress on the way to building an effective independent Trotskyist organization in Canada.

We would like to know what you think of the above so we can have a discussion as to what role you might play ~~at such a conference~~ in the discussions that are probably taking place around Mitch.

When you have a chance we would like to know how things look in the NDP there. Harry P talks of an effective left wing NDPer Gary Whalen. I understand Mahood who used to be in the old RMG is around the NDP in the Winnipeg area. Are you in touch with them? What is happening in the Winnipeg-Manitoba NDP.


And how is the job panning out

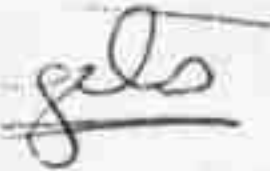
See note from first draft of this letter.

I will read this to the branch and let you know their collective thoughts.

Engelsson Andy Fowler



 Engels, Marx's famous co-worker, had some very important things to say about unity. You know that little pamphlet that we put out titled Marx and Engels on the Labour Party. Well space compelled us to leave out some comments Engels made—we were compelled to leave out—for instance the letter Engels wrote to Bebel June 20, 1873. See if you can borrow a copy of The Marx Engels Correspondence, a book that is truly worth owning and rereading again and again. It is indexed. Under Worker's Movement --and unity you will find several letters on the matter. Cannon of the SWP also had many experiences that were worth checking out

 "One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for "unity. Those who have this word most often on their lips are those who would sow the most dissension... These unity fanatics are either the people of limited intelligence who want to stir everything up together into one nondescript brew, which the moment it is left to settle, throws up the differences again in much more acute opposition because they are now all together in one pot--or else they are people who consciously or unconsciously want to adulterate the movement. For this reason the greatest sectarians and the biggest brawlers and rogues are at certain moments the loudest shouters for unity. Nobody in our lifetime has given us more trouble and been more treacherous than the unity shouters...." June 20, 1873

We are of course for unity but it is quite a complex problem the full realization of which requires proper preparations, there must be good grounds and above all there must be some common experiences of all the forces.



Wojciech Galewski  
Solidarnosc Information Office  
OFL - 15 Gervais Drive,  
Toronto

Dear friend:

I was suprised that neither Wally Mejeski or Louis Lenkinski turned over to you a copy of the enclosed leaflet that I and Steve Dankovitch put out and circulate both to the recent Labor Day parade here in Toronto, a friend distributed to the Labour Day parade in St. Catharines, and a couple of us distributed along Toronto's Roncesvalles Ave shopping area on a subsequent ~~Sunday~~ Sunday. You will note we picked up an item that appeared in your offices Solidarnosc NEWS by Walesa.

me

Dankovitch gave ~~a~~ a copy of your offices Publication Solidarnosc News. Would you be so good as to mail me several copies of the last couple of issues so I can acquaint others with it before we meet at your Gervais Drive office early afternoon October 9th.

Until we meet then--in solidarity

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto M4Y2K2  
October 16, 1984

Winnipeg  
Dear Kimberley

Usually after I have an important phone call like our last I try to to continue the discussion by writing up a synopsis in a follow-up letter. I got redirected until now but I think you pretty well affirmed ~~my~~ impressions ~~about~~ that I had gained from the Sherwood Podolich and TK phone calls.

It strikes me as a good but very cavalire proposition...good meaning well-meaning. The ~~unheard from Barry~~ unheard from one - Barry Wesiledder-has probably given the key impetus. Barry reminds me of the type of cook that because all the various itmes he stirs into a soup are probably good in themselves, in combination they will result in something useful. Barry figured much in Mitch's thinking--he had the impression that Barry was cold to our involvement and was much relieved when he learned that Sherwood was anxious to have us included.

I hope that the enclosed statement meets with your approval. I read it to Harry following the discussion in our meeting and he thought it summed up our opinion. You might think that we are making much ado about it all. But who knows what will come out of this and what role various opinions will play in the future. Would you give a copy to Mitch right away--and of course let me know his reaction. I would suppose the rest should be made available to the persons ~~who turn up at~~ the conference as explanation of our absence. Of course we are not trying to kill it and probably a great deal should not be made of our statement in that respect. TK I think tries to keep up somekind of relation with Mandel and Barry with Socialist Action so this incident will get around the Fourth International circles rapidly

Now that you have pretty well solved the housing situation and the job situation I hope you can start to get around the radical circles which are fairly extensive in Winnipeg. There must be a fairly flourishing NDP since they hold provincial government office. I would like to hear your opinion of the two persons Harry P mentioned to me

I would gather this weekend there will be a big discussion among the anti-war activists as to where we go from here. Can you give us a synoptic report--nothing like writing something down to get the old brain ticking --good for you and good for us. Ann will be at the Ottawa assessment as will Harry P and Joe

Weisledder has been circulating the documents of the Southern discussion. Some of them you would find very useful along with the Nicaraguan pamphlet you have. If he is not doing so I will send you a list that you can order from

all the best

Ross



Greetings to the revolutionary socialists gathering in Winnipeg over November 9, 10, and 11 with the aim of structuring a Trotskyist formation within a year or so.

Although we of the Forward Group have decided not to participate at this stage in your efforts to unify certain forces who consider themselves to be Trotskyists, we are fully supportive of your aim. Our decision arises from our determination not to take any action at this particular juncture that might result in making it even more difficult to advance to this necessary unification in the near future.

In our opinion the circumstances right now are not at all favorable to its success - this is particularly true insofar as the international factors that impinge on it. With regard to the situation in Canada we consider the three day conference premature.

We understand that the World Congress of the Fourth International is only months away. This congress will have to cope with the matter of its relations with the Socialist Workers Party of the United States on two grounds: (1) its rejection of the heart and soul of Trotskyism - the theory of the permanent revolution, and (2) its relations with those who have been expelled from the SWP for their opposition to this course taken by the SWP leadership. This is further complicated by the fact that these comrades are constituted in not one but two different groupings - the forces around Socialist Action and those around the 4th International Tendency. Furthermore the Fourth International has already a recognized section in Canada - the Revolutionary Workers League whose most prominent spokesmen have publicly identified themselves with the general line now being implemented by the SWP. We would hope that this situation which can only sow confusion in any gathering of Trotskyists in Canada at this time will become considerably clearer in the next few months.

While we have only a sketchy idea of the various grouplets and individuals invited to the Winnipeg conference we understand that they come from widely different backgrounds, and all the more that they are scattered in widely separate places across the country and have very little common ongoing working experiences with one another, in the union movement, in the New Democratic party, the various international solidarity formations etc. Regardless of the degree of agreement that we may find we have on what might be considered "fundamental principles" which can best be determined not in polemic or debate between "representatives" but by the groups and individuals themselves considering exchanged documents and publications, a common working experience, a working collaboration is critical. In our opinion this lack of proven ability to work together figured large in the recent LSA-RMG unification fiasco.

Since we understand that preparations for the gathering are well underway it would seem purposeless on our part to urge a postponement. We therefore express our hope, despite our reservations, that the conference succeeds to the extent that it marks progress on the way towards unifying the forces of Canadian Trotskyism.

The Forward Group  
October, 1984



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2  
961-4554  
Nov, 10, 1984

Peter Solowsznyj  
1933 Springland #2  
Montreal, Quebec H4E 2E5  
761-1014

Dear Peter:

I was very happy to receive your note the other day along with copies of Labour Focus--and the leaflet put out by our Edmonton friends

With regards to the latter--I have written them a note suggesting that they will have to dump the leaflet because of the unhappy evolution of Zygmunt P. I do not know if you are acquainted with the fact that he is no longer with the Solidarnosc office--unfortunately he has become a supporter of the U.S. State Dept and president Reagan. I am enclosing a copy of a leaflet that Steve Dankovitch and I published recently. We ran a short item on the Sun for which he writes a regular column. Unfortunately I cannot find time to keep on top of it but a friend tells me his latest is an open endorsement of Reagan. Did you know about the publication Solidarnosc News--I am sure they would be pleased to put you on their mailing list.

I wrote you for the Labour Focus' for at the time I thought there was a real possibility that I could start to circulate it. Unfortunately it did not pan out--however I am in touch with George Latkiewicz here in Toronto who you probably know and first opportunity I will move out behind him and his connections. I have given him your new address. I do not understand why he does not have a sub to Labor Focus. I myself have a sub which now at least seems to be coming. I already have a copy of the Summer 1984- Vol 7 No.2 issue, however I will sell it to someone

I am enclosing a ~~manxa~~ cheque for \$10.50 for the ones that I think I can sell

in solidarity

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y2K2  
December 14, 1984

Dear Howard Brown

Thanks for the leaflets and your enquiries

I am enclosing a copy of the Manifesto the Ont Caucus put out for the Convention last summer. I think the report in Forward pretty well covers developments there. The article ~~in~~ was designed to shake things up so we can hope to pull the caucus together for the Ottawa convention and the struggle over NATO.

Last weekend we did quite well at the Ontario provincial council meeting. Possibly you have heard that Simon Rosenblum has now swung over to the leadership on the NATO question. He was all gung-ho to declare his renegacy, announced earlier at the federal council and pushed for a debate. We would have preferred to get closer to the convention and take on a statement of the top brass.. but he threw down the gauntlet so there was nothing to do but for us to pick it up and fling it in his face. Dan Heap who has been tremendously influenced by Nicaraguan developments and the ~~Maximism~~ anti-war committee were challenged and so we put ~~Maximism~~ Gord Doctorow up. Gord made Roenblum look sick, particularly by using statements that he made in the book that he recently put out with ~~XXXXXX~~ Regier. The debat was quite short but worthwhile. Earlier the left caucus had arrangaed for a discussion on the recent federal elections for the lunch period but a picket line at the Eaton Center co-opted that. It was decided to go ahead with the discussion as soon as the council meeting adjourned and in the same place. This also came off well. I had distributed Forward ~~earlier~~ that morning with a major article on it and this material was used and amplified by several speakers. Several of the brass including Michael Lewis listened in.

We are now in the process of trying to open up the caucus and the atmosphere seems more favorable to do so. I and a couple of other comrades have been invited to come to the steering committee meeting....so we will see ~~in~~ in a couple of days. We are hoping that we can get some favorable response to getting a forum series underway- preparatory to putting the left caucus well into the debate. It was agreed that the next mailing will provide some material on NATO. I understand that Jewett is ~~standing firm~~ standing firm. I think that if we handle ourselves well we can defeat the brass on this and pull together a real left caucus in the process in

Yes I will turn your name and address to go on the mailing list

with socialist greetings

Ross

I suppose you know that a conference





## ONTARIO DIVISION

Canadian Union of Public Employees

Suppose you know a conference was held in Qinnipeg a few weeks ago to lay the basis for the constitution of a new Canadian FI section. We considered it was ill-prepared and premature and did not participate but representatives of both the US Socialist Action and the FI tendency had persons there. Ppobably Barry ~~xxxx~~ Weisleder was the most up front person

*I suppose you know a conference was . . .  
to lay the basis for a constitution . . .*

*We considered it was ill-prepared . . .*



December 14, 1984  
#2311-40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto

Anne Dowson

Dear Anne

This morning when planning the days work I proved unable to find your last letter to me. So---I took other matters up expecting that it would appear in the course of the day--but it did not. So I am proceeding with this note without reference to your last correspondence. Well you received a couple of branch minutes you were enquiring about. I was procrastinating for a while with regards to minutes. John Bacher put himself forward as secretary some while back. But as it turned out he does not type. Furthermore he writes with almost indecipherable letters and so large on top of that that it has been embarrassing to say anything about them. I finally geared myself up ~~xxx~~in as comradely a way as possible to challenge him and get John D to take over. Hence those useful minutes that I was able to send along toute de suite.

I met Marv at the anti-imperialist conference which took place on Saturday at the same time as the provincial NDP council. It appears that he did not get the left caucus notice. I did not have much time to talk to him as he wished to get into the conference and I had a couple of other distributions to do.

We did well at the council meeting. I think we have carried out a couple of common actions that have the promise of bringing the steering committee and ourselves closer together. The atmosphere was generally that we have to learn how to work together so that we can hope to build the left caucus in the process of giving leadership in the struggle against the brass' efforts to dump the party's anti-NATO position. Simon Rosenblum a month or so ago announced that he was for dumping the party's opposition to NATO before the federal council. This last weeks meeting set the scene for him to declare his renegacy publicly. He proposed a debate. We would have preferred to wait until the leadership submitted its revisionist resolution and take on the brass directly. However when he called for debate of course we could not stall for more satisfactory circumstances and we took the debate. The anti-war committee was asked to provide a speaker so Gord took it on--along with Heap which fortunately brings him back to us. They both did a good job. Simon was humiliated by Gord's effective quotes from his fairly recent book ~~which~~ and in my opinion looked absolutely ridiculous. We tried on two different occasions to force the leadership to take up the funding of the Catholic school system. They evaded doing so but I think they can't keep this up. OSSTF is also protesting the failure to have a debate in the Ontario house and one in the public--and they are going to go public with a mass petition.

The LC steering committee had arranged one of those poney meetings to be squeezed into the lunch period but the picketing of Eatons interfered and it was pushed down to the end of the council meeting. I thought it would be killed but it too was fairly successful. The last issue of Forward prepared everyone and George Ehrig did an effective job along



the line of our article. All in all with the various contributions by Lois, Gord, myself, Kasher etc it was a devastating expose of the federal election strategy which Michael Lewis and some others stood over to listen to. We did not reconstitute the Steering committee as was planned for the Sunday meeting as there was an endless series of mix-ups--the room number changed several times with only the new Left Caucus signer-ups at the Hamilton convention getting the notice. But we had an informal talk about opening up the steering committee--they all want to stay on even though they all claim not to have the time to really do anything

interjection--Yes, I see Lois did not ~~put in~~ detail the cost of operation of the camp. ...only supplying the lump sum figure of \$1,119.67. This breaks down from my record-

Hydro	122.51
Taxes	725.35

plus a couple of incident Insurance 240.00  
als

I assume that she did not include this in the communique for as you can see it is pretty well an established amount. About the only real change is that we ~~know~~ brought your Lois' and Marie's down from last year.

This next year we are going to have to sell some lots to bring it down cross the board. Several weeks ago Louis and I went out with a load of surplus goods from her place. It was the weekend when a terrific fog hung over the lake shore line. Lois is an excellent driver and we had no real trouble but the next day it continued and hundred of cars pile up. We did not get there until well after night had fallen so we unloaded the goods and before leaving went up to the lodge. Surprise! It had been broken into. Someone had smashed the lock off, had entered and pulled out the chesterfield obviously to sleep on it, shut the door and then went on their way. No damage, not even the lock which we picked up in locked position. I turned the dials to order and it opened and we locked the door again. We checked out your place and Marie's. All was well. I went over to tell our new neighbors in their new house., thinking that we ~~were~~ have disturbed them with our goings on. Had a hard time getting them to the door--must have been intent on watching TV. Their immediate response was that it must have been a Kingston escapee

Incidentally I think you are the last holdout on camp expenses. Are you able to handle? I hope that we everyone chipped in including transient guests. I hope your system worked ok. I haven't heard from the Cheryl household as to how the trip wot North Hatfield went off. I assume the books I turned over to go to Claire's were nicely wrapped and correctly addressed. They said they had some paper and ribbons. I gave them the list saying what for, for who. I have not read Malraux's The Conquerors in English. I am sure Walter will find The Jungle good if he makes the first effort to get into it. There is some mix-up there. I gather that Lois has gifts for all up at her place and was expecting that Jeanette or Ann would drop up to take them down with them

I hope you liked the last issue of the paper. Despite my fears, particularly about the article on the Left Caucus I have heard nothing but good about it. We are now thinking about the next one. Heading into the New Year with promising developments on all fronts. I see the Soviet bureaucrats and Fidel too congratulated the Sandinistas for their electoral achievement. Somewhat ironical don't you think. The Nicaraguans hold an open election with all currents contesting top office something the former haven't ever done. We are going to have to put Nicaragua more up front and center. The struggle goes on in Poland with the regime terribly compromised over the priest's murder. And now in Canada, a new opening in the trade union movement with the Autoworkers setting up pressure on all the international brass.



We are now starting to pull things together so that we can hope to do a real job in defence of the NDP's official position of opposition to NATO. The Broadbent leadership's revision is part of an international retreat---probably you know CND (BR) is dumping its anti-NATO position. The Spanish SP is also trying to revise its opposition. It is not excluded that we can defeat the Broadbent gang if we handle things correctly --I understand Jewett is holding firm. Heap came through with Gord but he told Gord he was unsure of himself. This is the big opportunity for the Left Caucus to take on a national character. Of course where Jewett ~~and~~ Heap and a few other MP's stand will be important---and also our ability to present some leaders in the debate. Thring and Rowles want Gord to lead off with the coming Left Caucus affair here in Toronto

Sorry this letter is so late--started on December 14 and now it is December 28

all the best

Ross



Attendance- Ross, Gord, John B., Dave, John D  
<sup>a</sup>Bsent with known reason- Harry K, Angie G

Chairperson--Gord D, Secretary Ross

Minutes of previous meeting not available due to lateness of John D

Correspondence- Communique on Winnipeg conference of November 9-11 on the founding of the Alliance for Socialist Action, designated as an alliance of supporters of the Fourth International in English Canada.

~~Minutes~~ read and discussed

Report on the Left Caucus and the Ont NDP provincial council meeting over December 8-9 by ~~Ross~~

The debate which will be the critical one at the summer NDP Ottawa convention opened up at the ~~Sunday~~ <sup>Saturday</sup> provincial council meeting which allocated 1/2 hour plus to a debate between Gord D and Dan Heap defending the party's official position of Canadian withdrawal from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Simon Rosenblum and ~~Kushynski~~ supporting the position now known to be that of the Broadbent leadership for the dumping of the party's opposition to Canadian membership in the military alliance. In many ways this was a public declaration by Rosenblum of his repudiation of the position that he had been long publicly identified with and with the Left Caucus which put its opposition to the NATO military alliance up front in both its federal declaration of purpose and in its declaration to this summer's Ontario NDP convention. Doctrow representing the NDP Anti-war committee and Dan Heap made an effective case with the former exposing Rosenblum from his own writings much to the amusement of the delegates and the embarrassment of Rosenblum. It was not possible to get a consensus of the council delegates and no time was allocated for questions and discussion. but it appeared that Doctrow and Heap had majority support. The discussion arranged by the Left Caucus for the noon-hour break on the federal election campaign was postponed so that the delegates could rally on the Eaton picket line until the close of the council meeting. It was held immediately <sup>following</sup> the final session in the form of a panel addressed by George Ehring and Jo Surich ~~and~~ Ehring's view was essentially that expressed in the current issue of Forward. Surich who considered policy irrelevant (subsumed by established consensus) was largely ignored by the discussion carried vigorously by various activists in the left Caucus particularly Forward Group supporters. Attendance was about 40 and included some prominent right wingers. We were unable to open up discussion on the funding of the Catholic schools despite attempts to do so. The question of the shorter work week referred by the convention did not come up when the leadership imposed a lengthy budget report. The Left Caucus meeting projected for the Sunday evening was called off by those attending because of the failure of many to get their notice including Gandle of Ottawa ~~and~~ the confusion of location and poor attendance. However several members of the steering committee in attendance agreed to a meeting open to other members of the Caucus to prepare the Toronto and the Ontario-wide left caucus work for the coming year

Report on the conference founding an alliance against US intervention and Canadian Complicity in Central America. held on the U of T campus at the same time as the NDP provincial council meeting. Kasher reported that it was very successful, attended by approx 130 persons with apparently good connections., he identified himself with the Left Caucus. Weisleder of the ASA played a key role. The meeting is preparing an April action to coincide with actions in the U.S. and elsewhere. It was agreed that the NDP Left Caucus and the anti-war committee would firmly identify with the ~~alliance~~ <sup>alliance</sup>

~~Membership and contacts~~

Report by Gord on correspondence with Winnipeg. It was agreed that we recommend that Kimberly move out in the direction of congealing a Manitoba Left Caucus



Dec 17, 1984 minutes ctd

Gord and Roz are making their home available for a new year's affair. to which we are inviting close contacts

Discussion on Left Caucus . It was agreed that the Left Caucus at its coming conference should publicly dissociate itself from Simon Rosenblum and his position that he has now publicly declared, ~~XX~~ support of NATO - on the grounds that this is the most clearly defined position of the Left Caucus both in its federal convention 1983 Manifesto and in its ONDP Manifesto and that we consider this a fundamental question which commits the Left Caucus to a critical struggle against the leadership in the coming Ottawa convention. Motion that we attempt to expand the steering committee to include a committee to arrange and promote its educational activities and other defined posts, in particular a treasurer and a secretary - agreed.

New Business- preparations for MTAC Feb 22-24. Ross reported on discussion that erupted at St. George annual meeting when he raised queries about Ward 6 Aldermen Layton, Martin and Alderman Reville deal over Bank of NS violation of city plan. Along with the Spencer sell-out a very discreditable action. Agreed that we raise this at the coming MTAC convention if possible under the report on accountability on the grounds that the convention disapproves of the ~~XXXXXX~~ deal in violation of the city plan and made in secret and urges those implicated admit to a grave error in judgement- agreed

Paper distribution--- has had an excellent reception--need to be informed of any important meetings- particularly autoworkers.

New meeting the first ~~Wednesday~~ after New Years -Jan 3  
adjourned



Ross Dowson- 2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto M4Y 2K2  
December 30, 1984

Winnipeg  
Dear Kimberley;

I thought you would like to get a copy of the minutes of the last meeting which I took. Yes, we got the communique on the founding of the Alliance for Socialist Action from Barry. All done up properly by Barry Weisleder who for all his dogmatism is a capable fellow. I was talking to Bob Sherwood who told me contrary to the impression given in the communique that it is not going anywhere. Of course that was our projection when they invited our participation ~~however~~--that is the history of such ill-perpared experiences however it is possible we will be proven wrong. We should touch it every once in a while. What did the US people- the people from the Socialist Action and from Fourth International tendency have to say about their participation--and what did they have to say about the SWP convention which slammed the door on their. And what do they hope from the Spring world congress?

As you can see from the minutes the struggle against Broadbent or his efforts to dump opposition to NATO opened up in high style with Of all persons, the most publicly identified Left Caucus personality debating Gordon Doctorow. Goerd did a fine job and we are now preparing to groom him and the rest of us for the coming debate. The Left Caucus will be sending material that will be very useful in the pre-convention and convention discussion. I think that it is possible for us to win this debate and in the process of the discussion put a real cross-Canada base under the Left Caucus. Of course Broadbent is moving against the NATO position in the knowledge that elsewhere it has suffered some setbacks--CND is now no longer pushing the anti-NATO position and I see that the Spanish Socialist party is pulling back. For the last several days I have been trying to bring our files up to date. The International Viewpoint is carrying some excellent material in the struggle around this question that is developing in Europe. I hope that you have a sub to that magazine--all the more that you have left Toronto. I would imagine the Alliance for Socialist Action People in Winnipeg are taking out subs for it

We got a very good response from the last issue of the paper. I hope you were able to make good use of the small bundle I sent you. What is the response to it from the persons around you. We could do very well with some feed in from comrades and contacts. When preparing the item on the Left Caucus I was continually concerned as to its effect. I felt that the Ehrings and Rowles would take great acceptance to it for after all it is very critical of the Left Caucus and they are the steering committee. But the occasions we have met them in the last while have been very useful and even amicable. Now we are being thrust into getting our act together for the NATO struggle. They were all for Gord leading off at the coming Left Caucus-conference.

We will have to get closer together in the next immediate period

comradely

Ross Dowson



Ross Dowson, #2311  
40 Homewood Ave.,  
Toronto, M4Y 2K2  
December 31, 1984

Dick Prinsep  
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Dick;

Received your Xmas card a few days ago--and hope you received the small bundle of Forwards earlier--and ~~xxxxxx~~ found it valuable.

I have spent the holiday period this year catching up on the various periodicals and odds and ends of materials that come into the box. It piles up ~~rapidly~~ rapidly. Never has there been so much worthwhile material available on developments in this turbulent world. Struggles going on everywhere you look being waged by a multiplicity of different forces. Canada and the United States stand out for their present period of apparent calm.

First and foremost we would have to say there is Nicaragua. Fidel and the Soviet bureaucrats sent them congratulations on the success of their elections both apparently oblivious of the irony of the situation. Here is Nicaragua, poor backward, threatened by the might of US imperialism both internally and externally and having democratic elections to a popular assembly contested by a wide spectrum of political tendencies. It is hard to believe that the Nicaraguans will not be seen as an example for others. Then there is the continuation of the political revolution in Poland and the box that the murder of an insignificant priest has put the Jaruzelski regime in. And while the pot heats up in South Africa we have our little stew in the autoworkers that should open up things in the cross-Canadian union movement.

When you were here last I meant to ask you if you know of a Brian Emery in Vancouver. He ran as an NDP candidate in one of the Vancouver area ridings--as did a former LSA comrade as you probably know. Brian wrote a few items for Forward some while back but the comrade who we had assigned to correspond with him proved unable to do ~~xxx~~ connect politically. I think he has a minor job in the party's provincial office--handling ads if I am not mistaken. I am thinking along these lines as we are approaching the struggle with Broadbent and company on the NATO question. And I also meant to ask you what Ruth Bullock has to say following the SWP convention and cutting off of the Socialist Action and Fourth International opposition tendencies. That was a horrendous article in ICP on the RWL redefinition of the Quebec question. It is surprising how people unlearn what they once knew.

At Gray (downstairs) is off to Nicaragua early January. I will tell you what he has to say

all the best

Ross Dowson



## STOP THE FRAME-UP IN POLAND!

A new phase of repression is about to begin in Poland. Not content with outlawing the independent trade union Solidarity nor with effectively suppressing all other traditional means of dissent, the military regime headed by General Jaruzelski is now set to stage a series of "show trials" against a select number of intellectuals and workers' representatives on charges of conspiracy and sedition. If found guilty -- and the official Polish press already berates them as such -- the accused face a maximum sentence of death.

Six of the accused were leaders of the KOR (an acronym for the Workers' Defense Committee, founded in 1976 and disbanded in September 1981). The remaining seven were leading spokespersons of Solidarity.

"Everything points to a juridical farce along the lines of the Moscow Trials or the trial of Dimitrov, accused of having burned the Reichstag." So stated Adam Michnik, one of the defendants, in his "Open Letter to the International Community" appealing for support.

Michnik's paralleling of the coming trials with the frame-up trials staged by Stalin and with those staged by Hitler during the thirties is a valid one. Their aim is the same: to serve up scapegoats for the regime's own crimes against the entire people of Poland. It is these bureaucrats and generals -- not the accused -- who are the real conspirators against the will of society and the real cause of social unrest in Poland.

The accusations themselves, moreover, are patent fabrications.

At no time have any of the defendants advocated terrorist violence or the overthrow of property relations that now prevail in Poland. They have all repeatedly called for peaceful change and a modification of the existing economic and political structures through a dialogue with the authorities. They have done so in explicit acceptance of Poland's military and economic alliance with the USSR. It is the state authorities who have sabotaged this peaceful and legitimate process advocated by the accused and who have resorted to armed terror and violence against the populace to achieve their ends.

Worldwide public opinion must not allow this monstrous political frame-up to go unchallenged. If carried out, these trials and threatened executions may be but a prelude to similar measures against the thousands who are still being held in prison and others who choose to continue to resist the repressive actions of the authorities.

We, the undersigned, appeal to the Polish authorities to:

- 1) immediately drop all charges against the accused;
- 2) immediately release them from custody;
- 3) halt all further harassment of them in exercising their legitimate rights of speech, publication and association;

AND FURTHER,

We appeal that, should the authorities persist in their present course, they grant the accused open trials held in full view of the world, and that they grant representatives of properly constituted bodies of international labour and legal opinion status before the Polish courts to monitor these trials and to participate in the defense of the accused.

*workers  
solidarity  
workers  
control*